Mediaeval Indian Painting

-EASTERN SCHOOL-

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D. P. Ghosh

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MEDIAEVAL INDIAN PAINTING
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(13th Century A.D. to Modern Times Including Folk Art)

D. P. GHOSH

SUNDEEP PRAKASHAN
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Dedicated to
The *Silpins* of Eastern India

PREFACE

Without tradition, says Serge Lifer, the perpetual transmission of the discoveries of one generation to another, there can be neither culture not progress, so that tradition and culture can be regarded as synonymous. The purpose of this book is to narrate the continuous flow of traditional mediaeval Indian painting without any interruption, specially of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the ancient zone of *prachya* or eastern India. Paintings of the classical age of the Gupta period of the Deccan and Central India, visualising plastic modelling and flowing lines are too well known, but not so of the flat, linear, angular, respresentations of east, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, in his memorable book, History of Indian and Indonesian Art discovered the emergence of the mediaeval trend in the 8th Century frescoes of Ellora in the Kailasa Temple.

The typical mediaeval School of Painting that commenced in the post-Gupta era developed and culminated as a follow up of the superb Pala-Sena paintings in the early mediaeval age between the 13th and 15th Century A.D. In the late mediaeval period the illuminated Buddhist manuscripts style, a legacy of the classical Gupta school of paintings, gradually disintegrated and assumed the characteristic eastern flavour, finally marged imperceptibly in local folk schools of Bengal and Orissa, after about the 18th Century A.D., with undenible Mughal and Rajasthani intrusions.

The pictorial records illustrated here, reflecting the gradual evolution of style covering more than 1500 years of mediaeval and modern age are mainly based on the Asutosh Museum Collections, the first University Museum in India, which I had the privilege of building up from the very scratch from 1937 onward. After my retirement in 1968, it was found that the collections have grown up in enormous number of about 60,000 pieces of sculptures of stone, terracotta, and bronzes of rare antiquarian value, as well as specimens of paintings, textiles and varieties of folk art objects of great aesthetic appeal. This was possible inspite of the unavoidable paucity of University funds, through the generosity of the public, regular exploratory surveys of the Curator himself, besides the sacrificial zeal of the teachers, and students belonging to schools and colleges, not excluding the Museum Staff. Further this largely contributed to the collection and preservation of a comprehensive array of folk art objects of different regional varieties. In 1955, the Unesco had approached me 'for advice and information on the best ways of supplementing the economic and scholastic programme of village development with a substantial programme for encouraging a creative participation in folk arts and for training competent leaders in the field.

For the photographic reproductions of the illustrated materials, I am grateful to the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University (col. pls. nos. 2, 8, 9, 24, fig. nos. 1, 2, 8, 12-27, 36-38 49-54, 56, 62-63, 65-69, 75, 77-79, 80-89, 92, 94, 95, 111, 113-117, 119-120, 124, 131, 133-134, 137, 138, 140); The Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta (fig. nos. 64, 110). The Craft Museum, New Delhi (fig. nos. 110-103, 108, 109, 122, 132, 135, 136); B. N. Makar, Chandannagare (fig. nos. 33, 34,); The Cambridge University Library (fig. nos. 3-6); David J. M. Mecutchoin (fig. nos. 96-99); Gurusadaya Museum (col. pl. nos. 18, 19 and fig. nos. 90, 91); J.C. Das, Bhuvaneswar (fig. 32); the Indian Museum, Calcutta (fig. nos. 48); the National Museum, New Delhi (col. pl. nos. 10 and fig. nos. 35, 39, 46, 104-106); R.P. Mookerjee Collection, Calcutta (col. pl. no. 12); Robert. F. Bussabarger, University of Missouri, U.S.A. (col. pl. no. 20); Raja of Ramgarh, Midnapore (fig. nos. 70, 71-74); the State Library of Kochbihar (fig. no. 76); Robert Skelton, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London (fig. nos. 58, 61). To the Authors Collection belong the following (col. pls. nos. 1, 3, 4, 6,7, 11, 13, 14-17, 21-23, 25, 26 and fig. nos. 7, 28-31, 47, 56, 57, 107, 121 126-130, 139, 141).

I am thankful to my son-in-law Surg. Comdr. A. Mookerji, I.N. (Retd.) for carefully photographing the majority of plates and figures of this book.

I am also deeply grateful to my erstwhile students Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, Director of Los Angels Museum, California, U.S.A., Dr. Sachin Biswas of the Archaeological Survey of India, Mr. Barendra Nath Makar, Research Fellow, All India Handicraft Board, for helping me in various ways in the production of this book and to the publisher, Mr. S.P. Singhal of Sundeep Prakashan for having given this opportunity to record the art history of mediaeval Indian paintings of Eastern India. Lastly I must express my sincere thanks to my dear wife Anjali for having encouraged me throughout my life and for her active co-operation in the production of this book.

In incorporating here the personal conclusions, based on well nigh fifty years of field survey and researches I apologise to my readers for the many short comings of this book, due to my own indisposition and advanced age.

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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE EASTERN TREND OF MEDIAEVAL INDIAN PAINTING

Perhaps it is not widely known that a distinctive style of painting in Eastern India, which may have originated in the Post-Gupta classical age flourished considerably in the Pala-Sena period as envisaged in the illuminated Buddhist palm-leaf manuscripts and book-covers. They were prepared over three centuries from the 10th to 12th, at the monastic universities of Bengal and Bihar, mainly Nalanda. Subsequently influence of the Pala tradition permeated the paintings of Nepal and Tibet in the North, where it survives even today, and even extended to South East Asia, specially in Burma, Siam and Java.

It is historically corroborated by the famous Tibetan historian Taranath of the 16th century that a distinctive Eastern Indian School of mediaeval sculpture and painting was introduced by two talented masters Dhiman and his son Bitpalo during the reign of Pala kings Dharmapaladeva and his son Devapaladeva in the 9th century A.D. This specific school of art flourished unchanged for four centuries in Bengal and Bihar from 800-1200 A.D. and beyond[1] under the auspices of the Palas who patronised Tantric Buddhism and subsequently by the Senas who were mainly Brahminical. Extant illuminated manuscripts of this style cannot, however, be traced before the 10th century.[2] Almost surprisingly a special Eastern variant of the north Indian *Nagara* style of architecture was simultaneously evolved in Orissa between the 8th and 13th centuries A.D. called the "*Kalinga*" style, as supported by an inscription in the *Mukha-mandapa* of the Amritesvara temple at Holal in the Bellary district, Karnataka.[3]

This sudden burst of regional efflorescence in all the branches of art in Eastern India was significant indeed.

It may be remembered that the Eastern Indian School of Painting did not vanish with the Pala-Sena period by the end of the 12th century. Even after the Muslim occupation of Bengal, we find a painted Buddhist manuscript dated 1269 A.D. belonging to the reign of Madhusudhanadeva.[4] The Eastern School of Mediaeval Indian Painting apparently degenerated in the 14th century but flourished onwards in Nepal after the migration of artists following the Muslim invasion of India. Differing from the plastic modelling and uninterrupted rhythm of classical Ajanta, it rather continued with unabated vigour for more than five hundred years, coeval with the very well known Western Indian school of painting of Gujarat and sharing with it certain mannerisms and conventions distinctly post-classical. For the first time expressed in the Kailasa temple murals at Ellora in the 8th century, the typical mediaeval trend[5] was later on elaborated through a strictly linear profile view of heads, double chin, three-quarter rendering of the body and sharp angular treatment of limbs sometimes accompanied by the protrusion of the further eye. It may be noted here that these formulas which became invariable adjuncts of Western Indian manuscript painting between the 14th and 15th centuries were visibly anticipated in the 11th century Chola murals at Brihadesvara temple, Tanjore,[6] Tirumalai temple,[7] Narattamalai temple,[8] the 16th century Vijayanagara murals at Lepakshi,[9] not to speak of the paintings of *Kalpasutra* manuscript from Mandu (1439 A.D.) in the National Museum, New Delhi[10] and of *Chaurapanchasika* and *Bhagavata Purana* (1500 A.D.) from Mewar,[11] in Mehta and Desai collections, Bombay, as well as illustrations of the *Laur-Chanda* manuscript of the late 16th century in the Lahore Museum[12] and the Hindi Avadhi *Laur-Chanda* manuscript (circa 1540 A.D.) in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras,[13] the recently discovered Buddhist manuscript of *Kalachakratantra* dated 1446 A.D. from Ara, Bihar in the Cambridge University Library,[14] (Chhavi, : Golden Jubilee Volume, Bharat Kala Bhawan, Barares, 1971), and U.P. illustrated manuscript of *Maha Purana*, Delhi, of late 15th century.[15] Therefore, I am emboldened to say that the above technical features formed the common aesthetic heritage of painting, mural or miniature, of the entire mediaeval India based on Pre-Mughal Hindu culture and not something peculiarly Western Indian or Jain Gujarati, as generally accepted so far. Rai Krishnadasa would like to call it the *Apabhramsa* school which, according to him also, besides northern India "flourished not only in Gujarat, Malwa and Rajasthan but also at distant centres of Bengal, Orissa and the South."[16] I shall try to establish here with the help of recently acquired pictorial records in the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, some of them unique and astonishing, that a distinct school of late mediaeval Eastern Indian painting flourished corresponding to the well known Western Indian school.

Ranging between the 12th and 18th centuries the Eastern variant of this mediaeval Indian style is illustrated in a few extant documents very significant but very little known—some discovered only recently. They comprise two engravings on copper-plates, incised drawings on palm-leaf manuscripts and painted book-covers from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as well as some illuminated Nepalese manuscripts in the Asutosh Museum, Asiatic Society, Calcutta and elsewhere. Besides, a limited number of other cognate palm-leaf manuscripts at the British Museum, Bhuvaneswar Museum, Raghunandan Library, Puri and a few private collections including a painted hanging of the 16th century in a Japanese collection, testify to the long continued existence of this distinctive school. It may be emphasised here that while the intrusion of Rajasthani tradition of painting is attested by a remarkable but very little known set of Bengal book-covers of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries in the Asutosh Museum and private collections; their contemporary Orissan counterparts, on the other hand, bear undeniable southern impress.

Although the Nepalese illuminated manuscripts of the 11th-12th centuries were mainly based on the Pala idiom, recalling by and large classical Ajanta tradition of plastic modelling through shading and resilent curves, emergence of the typical mediaeval linear technique, with three-quarter profile face, pointed nose and thrusting chin, is already betrayed in some of the painted book-covers e.g. an early manuscript No. 4713 dated in the sixth year of Mahipala (at the close of the 10th century) in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta,[17] kneeling devotee in the *Pancharaksha* manuscript dated 1120 A.D. in the Asutosh Museum, (fig. 1) an *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita* (Manuscript No. 20.589) in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston dated 1136 A.D.[18] and a wooden Ms. cover of Vessantara Jataka of about 1200 A.D. formerly in the Tagore collection, Calcutta,[19] and other examples published very recently.[20] In the Cambridge Ms. of *Astasahasrika* in the 5th year of Mahipala the facial lines of the side figures are already tormented and dessicated (fig. 5). We may refer here to Coomaraswamy's relevant observation, " in the eleventh century A.D. the distinction of style as between the Bengali and Nepalese illustrated manuscripts, is so slight as to be scarcely definable in few words." Simultaneous use of both the classical and mediaeval idioms, of naturalism and abstraction, of *Drishtam* and *Adrishtam* according to the canons laid down by *Vishnudharmottara*, is surprisingly found in a solitary Asutosh Museum Nepalese palm-leaf page of *Prajnaparamita* dated 1570 showing the birth of Buddha. Profile heads, accentuated by zig-zag lines are joined to bodies voluminous, soft and supple (fig. 2).

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CHAPTER II

PICTORIAL STYLE OF THE COPPER PLATE ENGRAVINGS OF ANCIENT BENGAL AND ITS INFLUENCE IN SOUTH EAST ASIAN ART

The most clear and representative specimens of this formal linear style are envisaged in two copper plate engravings of ancient Bengal. One of the unique treasures of the Asutosh Museum, viz., the copper-plate engraving of Dommanapala dated 1196 A.D. discovered by myself in the wilds of Sunderban bordering the Bay of Bengal (fig. 8)[1] shows a combination of full three-quarter profile heads with pointed nose, thrusting chin and swelling bodies, tightly modelled with strong emphatic outlines, in decorative but extraordinarily light gestures. Its iconographical and aesthetic interest is by no means insignificant. The engraving in question consists of a Vaisnavite group; a sitting Visnu, with the usual emblems in hands, and an adoring devotee. Pala and Sena sculpture abounds with many upright standing figures of Visnu but scarcely any seated image is known. At the same time the deity in *Lalitasana* pose does not rest on the familiar pedestal of double lotus flowers (*Mahambujapitha*) but on a *Ratha*, (chariot) flanked by a combined *Chhatra* and *Ketana*. The body is represented in full front view, while the head is turned away towards the *Bhakta* after the Eastern Indian idiom. The emblems, crown and the standard are depicted in a pictorial fashion. Although the body is bejewelled sparingly, stereotyped folds of the drapery, wavy fluttering scurves, pointed fingers and toes, accentuate the tendency towards linear crispness and angularity. This technique which later on become the universal quality in Western Indian painting may be traced back to the 10th century British Museum Pala manuscript

OR. 6902 and manuscripts of the reign of Mahipala referred to above. Additional peculiarities elaborated in the Jain miniatures of Western India are the *Minakhsi* or the fish-shaped eyes that replace the lotus petalled drooping *Yogacitta* of classical and early Pala-Sena style. Open budding eyes drawn out to the ear, another typical mediaeval technique, resulted in the projecting further eyes of a wide area in India and particularly Western India. It was however not pursued in the East to the fullest extent. An element of dramatic gesture yet another unfailing convention of the times, is visualised in the kneeling adorer confronting Visnu, the pliant body of which is impulsively flung with outstretched arm against the serene majesty of the divinity.

Another copper-plate engraving of Damodaradeva dated 1206, found in Mehar, dt. Chittagong, Bangladesh, also in the Asutosh Museum echoes the technical characteristics of the Sunderban example. Visualizing the epic legend of *Kamsabadha* (slaying of Kamsa) as indentified by me, the striking engraving on top of the copper-plate shows diademed Krishna in a dramatic gesture, with an uplifted hand in the moment of striking a mighty blow at his mortal enemy Kamsa trampled and stretched on the ground, whose long hair is firmly gripped in the other hand. It is indeed a picture of great animation and movement. Following the exact linear technique of its almost contemporary Sunderban counterpart in the west, the Chittagong engraving in the east, is of utmost importance illustrating unequivocally the pictorial style associated with the predominantly Vaisnavite Senas of mediaeval Bengal, that obiviously influenced the development of the arts of South East Asian countries beyond the borders of India.

Bisides visibly influencing Nepalese and Tibetan paintings the linear pictorial style of mediaeval Eastern India as envisaged in the numerous manuscript paintings and particularly the Bengali copper-plate engravings, provide not only valuable records for the art history of India and Bangladesh but of a large portion of South East Asia. I may be pardoned if I reiterate that more than forty years ago, I had hinted at the influence of the mediaeval Bengali pictorial idiom on the development of Nepalese and Burmese painting as also Siamese pictorial art and possibly the Wayang pictures of Java and Bali.

Subsequently Dr. Motichandra opined that "Western Indian School seems to have exercised influence on the wall paintings of the temples of Pagan, Burma."[2] Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray on the other hand discounted the possibility of Western Indian influence on Pagan murals. "The beginning of this linear conception can be traced back to Ellora painting", he observed, "but it was perhaps in Western India that this conception found its wide expression, though in a twelfth century example from the Sunderban, Bengal, we have one of its earliest versions (D.P. Ghosh, JISOA, Vol. II, no. 2) and even earlier than this in certain Pala example already cited. It now appears that this linear conception whenever it might have originated, must have become an all India property of art conception already by about the tenth or eleventh century."[3] I may further add here that when the Burmese Buddhist sculptures of the Ananda temple and some other tempels in Pagan had been undoubtedly based on Pala prototypes of Bengal and Bihar, it would be quite natural to suppose that the Pagan murals of the 13th century and after, should derive their inspiration from contemporary pictorial tradition current in adjoining Bengal than far off Gujarat.[4]

This will be apparant from a close examination of the 13th century Buddhist paintings of Burma, specially the exuberant and vicacious murals of Nandamanna,[5] (fig. 9) and Paya-thou-zu temple,[6] revealing the stamp of the Eastern Indian legacy in the emphatic postures of the figures with the conventional three-quarter faces, wavy curves of the lips and eyebrows, beaked noses, pointed double chin and sharply accentuated claw like fingers of the hands and feet (fig. 10) merging as usual in torsos conspicuous for the modelled capacity of line and uninterrupted flow of the swelling contour (fig. 11). The style of the late mediaeval murals of Siam betray a further elaboration of this East Indian style noted for the exceedingly slim attanuation of the bejewelled figures capped with elongated crowns, and betrayed by emphasis on sharpness and angularity. Perhaps it is not far fetched to conjecture that this characteristically East Indian mediaeval pictorial version culminated ultimately in the purely angular two-dimensional abstraction of the Wayang, mingled with Chinese intrusions, in the

15th century Panataram temple reliefs of East Java and the flat colourful puppets of Central Java and Bali, that continue to regale the local inhabitants till to this day.

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CHAPTER III

MANNERISMS OF EASTERN AND WESTERN PAINTING

The recent discovery of a 15th century illustrated Buddhist Tantric manuscript of Kalachakratantra (fig. 4) from Ara, Bihar, in the Cambridge University Library by Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, Keeper, Indian and Islamic Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the painted covers of which have greatly added to our knowledge of the mediaeval Eastern Indian idiom besides being of considerable significance to the history of Indian painting in general.[1] The manuscript dated 1503 of the Vikram Samvat corresponding to 1446 A.D. is beautifully written in Bengali script on palm leaves. This manuscript together with the subsequent publication by Dr. Pal of three cursory painted leaves of a *Karandavyuha* manuscript written also in Bengali script of 15th century in H.K. Swali collection, Bombay[2] now enables one to firmly aver that the typical Eastern Indian School, although in decadent form, continued to flourish for many centruries after the Pala-Sena paintings. After a comparative study, also, we are now in a better position to assess the distinctive character of the mediaevel Eastern Indian School not only from subtle differences in style from Western Indian School but examination of specific employment of certain mannerisms and conventions in detail too.

Even admitting that there is a superficial resemblance between the traditions of painting in the West and the East, there are certain notable deviations, viz. (a) the linear treatment of the "Western" tradition is more sharp and aggressive than the "Eastern", whose linear quality is less angular, more sweeping and sensitive. In Bengal, too, the plastic sense of Ajanta tradition survived to a certain extent in the modelled treatment of the line. The predominant use of the lapis-lazuli blue and gold, in the later Western version of the mediaeval style is conspicuously absent in Eastern India, (b) There is also difference in composition. Figures and objects in Western Indian painting are almost invariably placed on flat rectangular or oblong panels against an usually plain unadorned background. A close consideration of Eastern Indian and Nepalese painting will lead us to conclude that they are usually placed within a shaded architectural framework conducive to a sense of depth. The three-tiered shrine encompassing the Green Tara in the Boston manuscript cover[3] together with similar towered gateways of the painted Vasudhara Mandalas from Nepal of about A.D. 1500,[4] remind us of the miniature shrines with receding pyramidal courses of the Asrafpur bronze *Chaitya* of the 7th century A.D.,[5] elaborated in the later Orissan temples like that of the Rajarani in Bhuvaneswar of circa 11th century A.D.[6] The East Indian tradition of visualising Buddha, Buddhist divinities and narrative scenes, as identified by Dr. Pal, individually and separately, under arched frames or decorated shrines is happily retained in the illustrations both on the outside and inside covers of the 15th century *Kalachakratantra* manuscript, although in a cursory manner (fig. 5) Besides, there is also remarkable similarity between the graceful double storied towers crowned by a *Stupika* containing trefoil arches of contemporary Nepalese Vasudhara Mandalas and the artistic horizontally repeated miniature shrines of the Bihari covers with heavy storied roofs rising in regular gradation, pierced by foiled arches on elegant pillars and specially recalling a multi-storied roof crowned by a small Sikhara of a temple envisaging a seated Buddha under a trefoil arch. Although the painting belong to a Nepalese manuscript dated 1015 A.D. the peculiar multi-storied temple enshrining Buddha *Bhattaraka* represents it as situated in Pundrabardhana or North Bengal.[7] It is also surprising to note the survival of the identical use of similar architectonic motif even in modern Orissan painting, represented in the orderly repetitition of structural elements as envisaged in a Krishnalila *Pata* of Gostha where different divinities are enclosed by foliated arches within elaborately treated multi-terraced pyramidal *Mandapas* ending in *kalasa* finial,[8] of typical *Pida Deul* or *Bhadra Deul* of Orissan architecture (fig. 47). Similar stylised architectural frameworks are also found to be employed in the old *Dasavatara* painted playing cards from Vishnupur in West Bengal. (c) The difference between the two styles is wellmarked in the characteristic treatment of human figures too. For example we miss in the *Kalachakratantra* figures the bun-like coiffure and pointed beard so peculiar to Western Indian painting. Also similar to their Nepalese and Tibetan counterparts together with Avadhi *Laur-Chanda* representations,[9] the crowns on *Kalachakratantra* paintings are embellished with serially arranged jewels instead of the conventional Western components ending in a peak. It may also be noted that the tormented and tortuous treatment of double chinned faces in profile and bodies in three quarter profile are strictly linear after the mediaeval fashion but more fluid and less sharp and jagged than the Western technique; the concave legs are also shown always apart instead of the rigidly pressed pair of legs of the standing human figures in Western India (fig. 4). About the other principal characteristic of the human faces of the Bihari covers, viz. the extended eyes and the projecting further eyes, it has been explained above that they are not the characteristic features of Western Indian painting alone. They are common "mediaeval" accents used throughout India. Moreover, in the important variety of Gujarati manuscripts represented by *Vasant Vilasa, Gita-Govinda, Rati-Rahasya etc*. the usual three-fourth eye projecting beyond the facial outline is replaced by strict profile. (d) Even there is marked difference in the treatment of animals between the two. Usually conventional horses in the Bihari example and allied specimens are shown galloping with two forelegs upraised (see the panel representing Vessantara Jataka)[10] (fig. 6)[11] but in Western Indian Painting more or less realistically rendered horses are almost invariably shown trotting with only one foreleg upraised. It is no less surprising to note the continuity till modern days of the rather conventional galloping horse with bulging bodies connected with very slim slender neck and head in the Vishnupur *Dasavatara* painted playing cards of the 19th century together with contemporary examples (fig. 7) representing Kalki from West Bengal. Nepalese and Eastern Indian elephants too appear to be lighter and more agile than their western counterparts in general. It may be added here that after this detailed analysis of the style of paintings of the illuminated covers from Bihar it is difficult for us to fully agree with Dr. Pal's and other scholars' contention that the same echoes the technique and treatment of Western India.[12]

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7. Saraswati S.K. *op. cit.*, p. 179.
8. Similar composition and arrangement of groups underneath arcaded *Mandapas* is also to be found in a textile wall hanging from Golconda, *c.* 1600 in a Japanese collection strongly reminiscent of the Orissan technique (vide John Irwin, Golconda "Cotton Paintings", Lalit Kala, No. 5, 1959, pl. 1. fig. 1.)
9. Rai Krishnadasa, op. cit. Lalit Kala, no. PL. E.
10. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, pl. XCIII, fig. 279.
11. P. Pal, *op. cit.*, JAS, p. 268.
12. P. Pal, JRAS, pp. 108-109.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIAEVAL ORISSAN PAINTING

The peculiar geographical position of Orissa has inevitably moulded all aspects of her culture complex. Situated on the borderland between the north and the south fringing north eastern Deccan, her culture throughout the centuries, betrays alternating leanings towards the north or south, according to currents and cross currents of political-cum-religious history. Up to the 14th century the art and architecture or even the paintings of Orissa unerringly followed the North Indian classical style with few exceptions. It may be remembered, even after the north was overrun by the Muslim armies towards the close of the 12th century, Orissa continued to maintain her independence for more than three centuries. Therefore it is not surprising that culturally she was forced to turn away from the alien dominated north towards the powerful Hindu neighbours of the south, though they were not always friendly. Even while Mughal India under Akbar was wooing her in the 16th century she foolishly waged almost continous wars against the Reddis of Andhradesa and the Vijayanagara emperors not excluding the Sultans of Golconda and Bengal, resulting in general weakening of all the remaining independent Hindu states of India. Earlier, Kapilendradeva, the first of the Gajapati dynasty succeeded in reaching the sacred river Kaveri in the Far South in the 15th century. The lingering memory of this triumphant expedition had been continuosly immortalised by the muralist and folk artists of Orissa even to-day as *Kanchi-Kaveri*, symbolised by the colourful painting of Krishna and Balarama supposed, according to legends, to have had led the victorious army of Kapilendra, riding on prancing chargers. Incidentally, a few years ago, I could recognise perhaps for the first time that the 8 ft. high famous black stone image of Sakshigopala, installed in the temple of Satyavadi near Puri was difinitely of Vijayanagara origin, apparently a trophy carried back home by Kapilendra himself from the Kanchi-Kaveri expedition. Prataparudradeva (1497-1541), the last great Gajapati king, continued the fight against Krishnadevaraya, the greatest of the Vijayanagara dynasty, was defeated and ultimately forced to an alliance by giving his own daughter in marriage. In spite of occassional political superiority over the south, Orissa was culturally conquered in the end as a result of these close political contacts. From the 15th century onward, the overwhelming influence of the forms and formulas of Vijayanagara art tradition accompanied by inevitable Deccani intrusions from the west had been reflected in the pictorial art of Orissa. On the other hand, penetrating from the north, another decisive factor of these late mediaeval Orissan paintings-both mural and miniature—is the introduction of the Krishna cult from Bengal. Prataparudradeva himself became an ardent disciple of Chaitanya, spearheading the Vaishnava upsurge in Orissa. So the eclectic art of mediaeval Orissa, owes its fascinating texture to the ingenous blending of diverse elements—geographical, historical as well as religious. In 1941 as a result of my explorations in the interior highlands of Orissa, specially Ranapur and Nayagarh, a forgotten chapter of Orissan art and a hitherto unknown phase of Indian painting was discovered.[1]

Perhaps the earliest manifestations in Orissa of the mediaeval linear style, codified in the east by the Sundarban copperplate engraving, is to be found besides others in some damaged wooden book-covers in the Asutosh Museum collection. A pair, possibbly associated with the *Bhagavata Purana*, strikingly delineate some of the activities of Vishnu (i) *Gajendra Moksha* (fig. 12) and (2) *Trivikrama* (fig. 13). Apart from the potent linear abstraction and formal technique, this pair also strongly echoes the stylistic peculiarities of the Western Indian painted wooden book covers specially (1) of the palm-leaf manuscript of the *Dharmopadesamala* by Maladhari Hemachandra Suri (A.D. 1368) of Nawab collection[2] and specially the illstrated manuscript covers of the life of the Mahavira in the collection of Muni Punya Vijayaji,[3] dated 1399 A.D. (2) illustrations of the *Kalpasutra* and *Kalakacharyakatha*, dated 1370 A.D. belonging to the Vijayaji Jnana Bhandar at Ahmedabad[4] and (3) remotely also the Mandu *Kalpasutra*, dated 1439, preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi, and an illustrated U.P. Ms of *Maha Purana* of late 15th century in the collection of Sri Digambar Naya Mandir, Delhi,[5] Therefore on stylistic grounds the Orissan *Patas* may be ascribed to the second half of the 14th century A.D. like their Western Indian counterparts incorporating all their characteristic mannerisms, the red background however remains plain and simple, without the profusely detailed later versions. Oblong format, horizontal alignment of objects, architectural accessories in the shape of small pavilions, liberal introduction of animal figures-especially forceful elephants in white—all these are in common with the contemporary Western Indian practice. Like the Jain Gujarati paintings too, the spaciousness of the empty background of the Trivikrama panel, is sought to be partially covered by the surging elongated limbs and pointed edges of the fluttering scarfs of the dominant god, towering over king Bali and the lion, outlined in black. Colours are similarly strictly limited red, blue, black and white as well as unobtrusive; the movement of lines sure and swift. Patent manifestations of a purely intellectual outlook, this pair of *Patas* are noted for their lightness, elegance and nervous energy—all symptoms of the mediaeval expression. Another painted Orissan book-cover of the same period or little later, divided into two panels, containing figures of seated Sarasvati and Ganesa (fig. 14) under widely flung arches also incorporate all the principal features of the Eastern Indian School of Painting. It is also closely akin to the peculiar style. Illustrations of the *Durgasaptasati* manuscript, dated 1487 A.D. written in Malwa during the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin, now preserved in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras as well as to the goddesses Ambika and Saraswati of early Jaina manuscripts of Gujarat, specially the 16th century diety of the *Kalpasutra* manuscript from Patan[6] and many other contemporary figures like the 15th century Saraswati in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,[7] More sophisticated and conventional, yet another pair of *Patas*, perhaps of the 17th century from Mayurbhunj (fig. 15), show the emergence of local Orissan style in the softening of the meticulous outline and larger palette.

Obviously these few examples of painted book covers offer good material for the study of the very little known school of Orissan art between the 14th and 16th centuries A.D.

Subsequently Orissa produced some extra-ordinary miniatures unique in the annals of Indian art in the sixteenth century. The composite painting of this period also was unknown until in 1941, I personally collected from Garhjat states Ranapur and Nayagarh three examples, painted on heavily primed paper and mounted on linen for the Asutosh Museum. They are invaluable records of the continuation of the eastern tradition enlivened by a certain baroque vigour tempered by Mughal, Deccani and Vijayanagara influences. The most remarkable of these paintings visualise the reception of a Muslim embassy by an Orissan king.[8]

The King with an Abyssinian guard[9] and two attendants, at the back is seated in his palace before five Muslim ambassadors (fig. 16), the oblong horizontal composition recalling a contemporary Golconda painting of the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, showing King Jamshid Kuli (1543-50) conversing with Ibrahim Quali with attendants almost similarly arrayed.[10] A feeling of great dignity and repose is conveyed by undulating lines defining soft sensuous bodies of the Oriyas, bare upto the waist. Like the *Kalaka Katha* of the Gujarati manuscript, swelling rounded curves of the shoulders still conform to the *Gajatundakriti* or elephant trunk-motif of the ancient *Silpasastras*. As opined by Basil Gray, the general effect of this picture with its sumptuous colours of red, yellow, green, brown and orange, the superb characterisation of the protagonists specially of the arrogant, hook nosed Muslims and the amplitude and bravura of the design is unlike anything from contemporary India. Compared with these animated figures the courtiers in the Mughal paintings appear to be mere puppets. The dramatic gestures of the ambassadorial staff is but a development of the mediaeval trend. Incorporating a novel sense of realism and abstraction, fully modelled and shaped portaitlike heads, brown bodies clad with richly striped and flowered brocades, almost exactly reproducing Vijayanagara patterns appearing on the 16th century Lepakshi mural of boar hunt.[11] (col. pl. 2).

I must admit here that I had failed to identify properly this unique court scene, just after it was collected and published by me in 1941. Also therein I had suggested a late seventeenth century date. Subsequently, I think I have been able to properly identify it as the historic scene depicting king Mukunda Harichandana (1559-1567) the last of the great Gajapatis, in the 8th year of his reign, receiving the Mughal embassy sent by Akbar, seeking the short lived alliance against the Afghans of Bengal, as expressly mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl. So the suggestion of Basil Gray in Painting of India that the embassy may have come either from Bengal or Golo-conda may be after all tentative.[12] However, Gray was more or less correct in placing this miniature in the middle of the sixteenth century though his assertion that it may even be ascribed to the earlier reign of Prataparudra, seems now to be less plausible.

To the same category belongs a fragile fragment (fig. 17) showing a scene of intrepid horsemen marching in formation in a strikingly realistic way[13], an unfinished sketch, in light brown and blue with yellow touches, where the Mughal and perhaps European accent is undeniable. Now, the most notable feature of this piece is the predominantly linear character of the composition.

Modelling plays but a subordinate part although the sense of depth has been indicated in a masterly way by utilising the novel method of overlapping and foreshortening. Tilted heads, pointed lances, prancing chargers, hurrying feet, jostle with one another. We may almost hear the clatter of hoofs, neighing of horses, clash of armour or catch a glimpse of shining steel, close on the heels of the infantry.

Previously, I had observed in my article on Orissan Paintings in JISOA that another specimen also discovered in Nayagarh, while in an allied style, presents certain features which defy classification, according to any known phase of art.[14] There are in it, however, many traits indicative of a relaxation of Mughal and southern conventions and a gradual reversion to the traditional Eastern Indian idiom. These four pages painted on both sides of a *Gita-Govinda* manuscript (upper half of one of which is shown here (fig. 18), envisaging Gopis searching Krishna amidst the *Kunjavana* on the moonlit banks of the river Yamuna, are according to connoisseurs, "Masterpieces of fluid and graceful drawing both of the female figure and of animal and tree forms. Lightly touched over with colour, this sketch conveys the effect of a poetic experience movingly evanescent." Tall willowy and stately forms draped transparently, roam under the drooping leaves of tender plants delineated with gliding undulating lines, denoting anxious grief.

In spite of the fact that profile heads of Gopis have the indelible stamp of the ladies of the 16th century Lepakshi mural of Vijayanagara and the trees reminiscent to some extent of Europeanised Deccani treatment "they are superior in feeling, one must think, to Deccani and Vijayanagara work of the some period."[15] Also a good idea of the quality of contemporary Orissa wall painting may be obtained from this lovely miniature.

It may be mentioned here that this unique composite style of 16th century Orissan painting has gained additional evidence after a lapse of about quarter of a century. Quite recently, the Asutosh Museum was lucky to acquire 19 leaves of an extremely damaged-palm-leaf manuscript written in Oriya script, majority having coloured etchings on both sides. Incised as usual according to traditional practice by an iron style and rubbed with black soot, the sharply outlined drawings are sparingly touched with red, black, white, emerald green and yellow, heightening the total effect. One of these remarkable leaves (fig. 19) depicting a magnificent *Hamsa Duta* seated before a prince wearing splendid robes resting against a richly textured pillow, had enabled me to at once to identify the fragile fragments as belonging to a manuscript of *Chitralekha Kavya* being equated with the famous epic tale of Nala and Damayanti here.

An attendant fanning the noble bird, delivering the message to the regally attired hero himself, bespeak its extraordinary character. After Damayanti's favourable response the next panel shows her father, whose noble poise and truly Indian regal miens easily attracts attention (op. similar treatment of king Mukunda Harichandana of the emabssy scene), granting audience to his chief minister to make suitable arrangements, and send invitations for the *Sayamvara* (fig.20). In subsequent leaves, gods and kings from all corners of heaven and earth are dramatically hurrying on galloping chargers and elephants to reach the Sayamvara Sabha first, in their eagerness to possess Chitralekha, a celestial beauty (figs. 21, 22).

In another remarkable piece the final choice of Chitralekha throwing the garland around the neck of her smilling lover Sudarsana is very dexterously depicted (fig. 23). Tied to the husband by a wedding knot she is followed by a procession of her female relations and lastly perhaps by her own father (fig. 24). Finally, the happy union of the couple is admirably delineated in compact volume and expressive gestures of the pair, charged with pent up emotion (fig. 25).

Regarding pictorial style apart from the characterization of string like miens of horses, flowered wavy folds of drawing reminiscent of Mughal & Deccan conventions, attention may be drawn to the fact that there is a close relationship between the Chitralekha manuscript and the palm-leaf manuscript of the *Amarusataka* of a little later date, from a private collection in Mayurbhanj, the scenes in both being enclosed within structural elements such as arches and pavillions decoratively treated.[16] The manner in which the Saris skirting the heads of women in Orissan drawing stand out in billowy curves strongly recalls the way in which the scarf standing out behind the heads (*Odhni*) is treated in *Laur-Chanda* Ms. in Labore Museum and Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.[17] Judging by style also, the British Museum palm-leaf manuscript paintings of *Bhagavata Purana* may not be placed earlier than the 18th century as claimed by the authors of Painting of India.[18]

On stylistic grounds; this torn and mutilated line drawing from

Orissa (fig. 26) a document of unusual interest, may be placed in the seventeenth rather than in the eighteenth century.

It represents perhaps a fully armoured bearded hero of the *Mahabharata*, in the act of shooting an arrow in a battlefield, riding mercilessly over the bodies of fallen foes, in a chariot. Treated by and large in a decorative way, with the help of calligraphic lines and following strictly mediaeval usage, the flat rectangular surface within the chariot is cleverly sought to be filled up by projecting limbs, flying tassels and sharp edged scarfs of the warrior, augmenting the effect of detailed precision. At the same time the miniaturist tendency is given ample scope in the diadems, armour and costume besides the significant standard in front. Stylistically the Orissan warrior is evidently based on the mural figures of identical 16th century Vijayanagara Siva warriors of Tripurantaka[19] and Madanantaka[20] from Hampi murals. As revealed by the rear part of a bull on the top of the standard the fighter may be identified as Siva himself (Vrisavadhvaja) although his beard and beards of the fallen foes may indicate the influence of the Muslim invaders of the Vijayanagara empire. This is further endorsed by the bearded royal hunters of the Lepakshi murals. The Orissan warriors too are distinguished by sharp acquiline noses and curling beards proclaiming distinct Muslim features.

Contrary to spirit of paper drawing, the incised palm-leaf painting, Coronation of Rama, (fig. 27) is sharply defined against a plain background.[21] All the figures have a greater plastic volume in spite of the linear character of the drawing emphasised not only by the rounded outline of the lower limbs, costumes filled with intricate patterns and liberal use of jewellary but also by the judicious employment of colour. Only the upper parts of the bodies are touched with colour. Rama is covered with emerald green (*Shyama*) Sita, Lakshmana and Hanumana are conscpicuous in yellow, the favourite body-colour of Orissan artists. The outlines are mainly drawn with black. Red is used in some places to heighten the effect. Agile, bending and reslient curves are skilfully combined and invested with a calligraphic definition. The drapery of the figures is replete with patient and dexterous patterns. Pointed noses, angular lines and emphatic gesture belong to realm of late mediaeval eastern Indian Painting. The tilt of the face and determined movement of hands and legs convey power. Perhaps belonging to the 17th century, this leaf is hieratic in conception and signifies a reversion to the old Indian tradition discarding all Muslim influence.

Before undertaking consideration of folk art, let me touch upon some vestiges of ancient mural paintings. Unlike Bengal, for three more centuries (12th-15th century) Orissa could withstand the onslaught of Muslim invaders. The myriad ancient stone temples made of imperishable materials with which they were constructed could withstand the ravages of time and save the enchanting series of frescoes decorating the shrines both inside and outside. Among the extant frescoes mention may be made of precarious existence of the very little known and perhaps unpublished examples of surviving panels of mural painting in both sides of the sourthern borders of Orissa. In 1974-75, during explorations in the northern districts of Andhra Pradesh, formerly within the kingdom of Orissa, I rather unexpectedly came upon the freize of Vaisnavite paintings running along the upper part of the wall of the Jagamohana, (the rest being unfortunately white washed) of the temple of Kurma (13th century) in the Srikakulam district adjoining Ganjam district of Orissa. It is to be noted here that in India, temples are rarely dedicated to Kurma, the first incarnation of Visnu.

Of undoubted Orissan style, betraying some Andhra admixture, the question of date should be fixed first of all. That Orissa exercised undeniable influence on the late mediaeval art and architecture of modern northern Andhra is proved by the style as well as inscriptional evidence. Besides pictorial example, Orissa also left here undisputed impression on surviving architectural relics not only on the solitary spire of the north Indian Nagara style of the Kalinga variety, in the admirable stone temple of Saripalle in the Vizagapatnam district of Andhra, but also some stone sculptures in the famous composite Narasimha temple of Simhachalam in the same district. Bhanudeva III of the Eastern Ganga dynasty of Orissa ascended the throne in 1276 A.D. We learn from votive records of the king the important fact that he donated to the temple of Srikurmam metal images (still extant) of his father Narasimha and his step mother Gangambika.[22] The frescoes however cannot be dated as early as the 13th century because one of the panels contains the story of the Kanchi-Kaveri expedition which was undertaken by Purushottama, the powerful Gajapati emperor of Orissa and Kalinga (1479-97) A.D. From the point of view of style besides epigraphic consideration, the frescoes of Srikurmam must have been drawn after the Kanchi-Kaveri expedition of Purushattamadeva in the 15th century, probably in the 17th. Four scenes selected here are expected to give a fair idea of the theme and nature of representation from the Mahabharata (1) The Kanchi-Kaveri scene (fig. 28) where a historical scene is modified by local romantic legend showing the brothers Krishna and Balarama attired in floriated Muslim robes on galloping horses and confronted by a milkmaid, supposed to lead the marching victorious army of Purusottamadeva to the south which led to the humiliating defeat of the Karnataka king, is effectively delineated against open space unlike the close overlapping rendering of the same subject in contemporary Puri *Pats* (fig. 57).[23] (2) An oblong panel describing the Kaliyadamana (fig. 29) is revealed in fleshy opulent curves and swelling bosom of figures participating in the dramatic incident and the particular configuration of the figures as opposed to the rigid angular treatment of later times as betrayed in (3) the Anantasajjya scene of Visnu (fig. 31) resting on the coiled serpent Adisesha flanked by peculiar *Odhni* of the goddesses emphasizing the heaving torsos and lastly (4) the valiant scenes of Krishna uplifting Mount Govardhana to protect the entire population of Brindavana from the wrath of Indra, king of gods. (fig. 30).

Identical delineation of forceful action revealed in another series of mural paintings devoted to Ramayana, probably unnoticed so far, is to be found in the Birinchi Narayana temple of Buguda in Ganjam district, just across the border. They are akin to the 17th century murals of Srikurmam temple. Close stylistic resemblence is betrayed by the heroic thrust of the chest and aggresive postures of the triumphantly marching Rama treacherously shooting the fatal blow against Bali, the king of monkeys, hidden by seven plam trees (figs. 32, 33). Lines of utmost delicacy succeed in outlining the swaying forms of blossoming trees, in response to the strident note of the principal hero. Another panel remarkably visualise Jatayu defiantly attacking the chariot of Ravana decorated by a ferocious head of Rakhsasa not seen any where (fig. 34).

Beside the mural paintings noted above, traces of old murals are to be found in many ancient shrines viz. the gigantic scene representing Anantasajya Narayana, rather damaged, on the southern wall of the Bhogamandapa of the celebrated Jagannatha temple, Puri; as well as the running freize on the top portion of the Jogamohona of Gundicha-Bari, Puri, depicting the rhythmic sway of Rasalila; exterior of the island situated in the centre of the Chandana Sarobara, Puri; Emar Matha and not the least the Dakshina-Parsha Matha close to the southern boundary wall of the Jagannath temple Puri, where the visitor is really amazed at the resplendant murals (although modern) entirely covering the succession of rooms in the Matha from floor to ceiling and above, almost reminiscent of the caves of Ajanta.

We find the 17th century technique of visualising the story through heaving bosoms, tilted heads and other expressive gestures even in the miniature painting of an extremely rare, narrow ivory book cover, containing 16 ivory leaves of Mahabharata, lately acquired by the National Museum, New Delhi. Inspite of corrosion of the surface, the story of the Astika Muni, scion of the Nagas, successfully persuading King Janmenjaya, who is determined to exterminate all the serpants of the world for having fatally bitten his father King Parikshit of Hastinapur, successfully pursuading him not to do so illustrate in forceful lines the triumph of spiritual force over the mere temporal, however mighty. Against a deep green background the Muni and the King are shown in profile facing each other, the other ascetics on the contrary are represented in realistic moods and postures reminiscient of the 16th century art (fig. 35).

A singular aesthetic sensation is provided on the other hand by a number of old erotic paintings on paper, in the author's collection, collected about fifty years ago (col. pl. 3). The ever popular loves of

Radha Krishna is dramatised here, in the first place, by the extremely vicavious concept of the vibrant deep blue figure of naked Krishna contrasting vividly with the golden yellow body of Radha, upside down. The admirable contrast of colours is matched by the unusal manouvre of the passionately excited couple viz. the rectangular structure of the hands of Krishna holding the outstretched legs of Radha surmounted by the profile head of Krishna is skillfully responded by the rectangular structural design below, depicting Radha grasping the legs of her superhuman lover with her head downward on the middle supported by a pillow. Sparsely ornamented in aristocratic taste, the pulsating rhythm of the unusual composition is reinforced with primeval energy, perhaps tinged with Adivasi ferocity. Characteristic mediaeval accents of jerky angular contours of strident male dominating the submissive female, may be traced to the transitional art of the 17th century. Obviously one of the outstanding paintings of Orissa, the mood and manner of expressing the erotic impulse is equalled only by the all pervading passion of the sculptures of Khajuraho and Konarak (pl. 16, fig. 38). Another painting of the same series (col. pl. 4) rather presents a picture of calm repose in the entwined figures of Krishna holding a flute and Radha with a flower, facing each other. Seated regally arrayed the carefully dressed coiffures and sophisticated adornement of the loving couple bespeak a sense of fervour in the outstretched limbs cleverly depitcted on a richly upholstered throne in warm red and purple. The angular jerky movements of projecting hands of the pair, inseparably connected in amourous, embrace, is balanced by the outstreched legs of the seat, with horizontal parallel lines of the throne conducive to a sense of restfulness, through opposite forces.

Perhaps illustrating the Panchasayaka (or five arrows of cupid) of the famous Oriya poet Upendra Bhanja two paintings on paper, evidently produced by the Khallikote School of Ganjam in the late 18th century envisage an aesthetic approach entirely different from the pictorial language, of the amours of Radha Krishna shown above. The frontispiece (col. pl. 6) and all the coloured drawings of this manuscript reveals a sense of reticence as opposed to hectic activity of the last paintings. An overpowering sense of clarity and precision is conveyed by the frontispiece figuring the reposeful dignified image of crowned Kandarpa, represented in bold opulent limbs, holding in one upraised hand the bow made of sugarcane and another a five pointed arrow, the dart par excellence of love. The yellow bodied diminutive figure of demure Rati; draped in red and offering a betel (*Pan*) to his lord is admirably visualised echoing the soft expanding curves of the invincoible god wearing a blue dhoti. The other painting (col. pl. 7) represents an unusual picture of an aggressive lover enveloping the curling Rati in opposite movements of dynamic graceful curves of unparalled rhythm. If the Radha Krishna paintings visualize the highest tension of the body through compression and accentuation, the Kandarpa-Rati painting characterised by inflated voluminous limbs highlight a contradictory impression of floating bodies rotating along the axis (pl. 17, fig. 36).

Towards the beginning of the transitional period i.e. early 19th century. The figure of a seated Mahant of a Matha on primed cloth has a monumental quality. The light blue colour of the massive body shines against a white background with an orange canopy. The widely flung trefoil arch over the head adds to the largeness of the effect. Ample curves descriptive of opulence along with an expression of intolerant authority ably portray this Brahman Mahant. He is shown explaining some doctrinal intricacy. The largeness of the design belongs to the tradition of *Pat* painting. It survives in Orissa and some parts of Bengal to this day. However, the love of intricate patterns of delicate workmanship present in the previous school, persists to a certain extent in the minute floral decorations of the pillows and also in the rampant horse at the springing of the arch on the right hand side. This mingling of the art of the miniaturist and the expansive design of mural painting is a dominant factor in the paintings of Orissa in the last two centuries (fig. 36).

Such a combination of the miniature and mural styles is also to be seen in the Kaliyadaman *Pat* (fig. 37) by a mad but a master artist of Balisahi of Puri town named Giridharidas who for palpable reasons left the works unfinished. It shows Jagannatha and Balarama in anthropomorphic forms with Subhadra in the middle. Krisna as Jagannatha tramples and joyfully dances upon the huge snake just subdued. The emblems of Visnu and Krisna are combined in the hands of this unfinished painting from Puri town executed as late as the first part of the 19th century. Set against the dull Indian Red of the background, the yellow body colour including the garment of the main deities stands out prominent. Black is applied to the face of Jagannatha and to the lower part of Subhadra. The hands and feet of Jagannatha as well as the pedestal of Balarama are painted pale blue. White & green are sparingly used.

Barely 17½″×13″ in dimension, this painting is large in its conception. Framing the unique dancing figure of Jagannatha the animated writhing form of the monstrous snake, responding to its rounded voluminous appearance, gently echoes the smooth contour of the limbs. The technique is so different that for the uninitiated it is scarcely possibly to believe that these two paintings (this and the last one) come from the same region.

Colours are sober & mellow. The delicate rendering of fingers is akin to the '*mudras*' of mediaeval manuscript paintings of Bengal and Nepal and shows survival of classical Indian pictorial traditions. In the finished works on diademos and jewellery the miniaturist tendency of late mediavalism is given ample scope. In fact the details of plumage etc. of a pigeon in another *Pat* by the same painter are executed with such precision and minuteness as not to be apparent to the naked eye.

A Kandarpa Ratha or the Chariot of Love (unfinished) is the subject-matter of one of the late paintings reproduced here (fig. 38). The Chariot is ingenously composed of the seated figure of Kandarpa, enshrined by lovely feminine form in all possible alluring postures as structural component elements. Musicians and Gandharvas hover about. It is a paste board painting from Puri town by an artist who died only 80 years ago (size : 7½"×10½"). Such ingenuous conception is paralled by a contemporary Navanari-Gunjara *Pat* (see fig. 43).

Silhouetted profiles, compact bodies and the charged density of colours (Indian Red, Yellow, Green) belong to early Twentieth Century Orissan Art.

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3. *Ibid.* figs. 205-208. Perhaps Dr. Norman Brown reproduced the same manuscript from S.M. Nawab collection, Ahmedabad, also dated 1399 A.D. in JISOA, Vol. V, 1938, pl. IV, fig. 16.
4. Jaina Chitra Kalpadruma, figs. 67-72 and 79-81; Moti Chandra, *op. cit.* pl. 20.
5. Karl Khandalavala and Moti Chandra, Lalit Kala, No. 6, Oct. 1959, pl. II, figs. 6 and 7.
6. Moti Chandra, *op. cit.*, figs. 86.
7. Brown Norman, The Story of Kalaka, Washington, 1933, fig. 12.
8. Ghosh D.P., "Orissan Paintings" JISOA, Vol. IX, 1941, pp. 149-200, pl. XIII as well as Barrett and Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
9. The Sultans of the Bahamani Kingdom and other potentates of the Deccan were in the habit of employing in their retinue large number of Habshi Slaves and it is therefore not surprising that Kings of Orissa should also followed their example. (R.D. Banerjee, History of Orissa, Vol. I, p. 311.
10. Muhammad Asraf, "Golconda", Marg, Vol. XVI, No. 2, 1963, p. 40, fig. 1.
11. Barett and Grey, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
12. As suggested by my friend late Paramananda Acharyya. Director of Archaeology, Orissa.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
14. D.P. Ghosh, *op. cit.*, pl. XV, fig. 2.
15. Ghosh D.P., *op. cit.*, pl. XIV; Barrett and Grey, *op. cit.*, p. 73; and Ashton, Art of India and Pakistan, London 1950, pl. 80, fig. 865.
16. Barett and Grey, *op. cit.*, p. 75. Ashton, *op. cit.* pl. 80, fig. 865. Identical style may be noticed on a Golconda cotton wall hanging of *c.* 1600 A.D. in a Japanese collection-Irwin, "Golconda Cotton Paintings of Early 17th century Lalit Kala, No. 5, April 1959, pl. 1, fig. 1.
17. Stella Kramrisch, "The Hundred Verses of Amaru", illustrated, JISOA, Vol. VIII, pl. X.
18. Rai Krishnadasa, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
19. Barrett and Gray, *op. cit*, p. 74.
20. Ghosh, D.P., *op. cit.*, pl. XVI.
21. Sivaramamurti, C.—South Indian Paintings, New Delhi, 1968, pl. 62.
22. *Ibid.*, pl. 63.
23. Banerji, R.D., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 317-18, Vol II, pp. 280.

CHAPTER V

MEDIAEVAL BENGAL PAINTING

About a decade ago we had been faced with a perplexing void so far as Bengali painting was concerned, whether mural or miniature, in the 14th and 15th centuries, except the recently published painted covers and illustrated pages of two Bengali Buddhist manuscripts the *Kalachakratantra* and *Karandavyutha* of the 15th century from Cambridge University Library and Swali collection, Bombay, referred to above. They happily serve to bridge the gulf in a most welcome manner, at the same time testifying to the continuity of the Eastern Indian style from the Pala Sena Period.

Additional knowledge of this dark period furnished by the Buddhist illuminated manuscripts of the Tokyo University Library and some forgotten Vaisnavite book covers found at Visnupur are most welcome in this connection. But I am personally of opinion that the series of utterly schematic illustration of Tantrik Buddhist deities ascribed by late Prof. S. K. Saraswati from the Tokyo collection in his new publication to the 12th-13th century A.D. they may be placed a century later. They have lost all vestiges of robustness of late Pala plasticity in modelling and fluency of lines. Devoid of all expression the flat grimacing faces, dessicated linear features specially the insipid langorous feet proclaim their closer affinity to the cursory 15th century style of the *Kalachakrayana* and *Karandavyuha*.

Perhaps the oldest painting from Visnupur is a 14 inches long painted "wooden book-cover (fig. 58) of a palm-leaf manuscript of

Visnupurana which is dated A.D. 1499 (1421 *Sakabda*). It represents some of the incarnations of Visnu. This work is an example of the primitive Hindu art which sprang after the storm of Muhammedan invasion had subsided. Though Mallabhuma was not actually invaded, still it insensibly responded in its art in sympathy with larger neighbours." According to French "this drawing possessed a certain mysterious vitality and savage inventiveness of design characters of primitive art in many places." Mr. French cannot be blamed if he is not definite about the school to which the *Visnupurana* painting belonged. It undoubtedly belonged to the Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval painting. Zigzag movements of the figures, flat profile of heads with double chin, torso in full front particularly the typical flabby concave legs invariably affiliate it with its 15th century Ara contemporary from Bihar, represented by *Kalachakrayana* and *Karandavyuha*. Three centuries later another Visnupur painted book cover of *Dasavatara* dated 1744 A.D. (*Shakaba* 1666) showing the last five of the ten incarnations of Visnu in a bold and vigorous style however betrays strong Orissan influence that can be explained by the Orissan occupation of Visnupur & Radha (i.e. S. W. Bengal) in late historical times .(fig. 59). In connection with these remarkable set of early Bengali illuminated *Patas* further mention may be made of a pair of manuscript covers of exceptional merit. Terse and tense, a *Gosthalila Pata* from Midnapur notable for its archaic treatment of figures, human or animal, was probably painted in the 15th or early 16th century before the intrusion of Mughal or Rajasthani elements. Cowherds followed by hurrying flocks are surging in forward impetuous movement towards the pastures while at the right hand corner the towering figure of the quaint fish-eyed Yashoda is busy in dressing the young brothers Krishna and Balarama, equally impatient to join their comrades in the open. In common with the overriding emphasis on abstraction and angularity, the diagonal force of the composition is vividly expressed by hurling the tall lanky figures in space emphasised by pointed coiffure, upturned conical faces of men as well as animals, jutting projection of angular hands and not the least typically concave feet. Full of excited movement the striking panorama is presented against a sombre red background relieved by bright green yellow of the shorts worn by the young, characteristic of the first phase of late mediaeval Bengal painting (fig. 62).

The back of the *Pata* depicts a lively Kirtan scene, with the ecstatic dance of Chaitanya in the centre, flanked by small agile figures of devout musicians in a rather archaic way (fig. 63). Both in technique and treatment they undoubtedly betray a continuation of typical mediaeval Eastern style. All the principal ingredients of the style are present here. Flat red background devoid of earlier architectural or vegetal intrusions, limited palette, flying scarfs and garlands, high strung nervous tension, two dimensional figures in dramatic gestures, outlined seperately and sharply against vivid colours. Midnapur borders upon Orissa in the south. So it is natural that her artistic expression should be tinged by Orissan formulas. This is patent in the typically Orissan moustached and bearded faces with Mughal turbans, pointed noses and fish-eyes extended far to the ear.

Alien domination and persecution of Buddhist artists, steeped in the Pala and Sena idiom resulting in their mass migration to Nepal, Tibet and the Hill States, must have numbed the aesthetic impulse of the people. But it is quite likely that some artists took refuge in the courts of semi-independent chieftains who flourished in the wild inaccessible uplands of Mallabhum and neighbouring areas in the western fringe of Radhadesa, bordering upon Chhota Nagpur and perhaps some portions of East Bengal fortified by innumerable riverine estuaries, all the while, resisting Afghan and Mughal onslaughts.

A great religious upsurge followed the advent of Chaitanya in the 15th century. The whole country was convulsed with intense *Bhakti* cult, which is reflected in the production of exquisitely painted colourful wooden manuscript covers, in the post-Chaitanya age, in this particular area only i.e. in the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Hooghly ahd Midnapur and specially at Vishnupur, the capital of the Malla Chiefs, notably under Bir Hambir (1591-1616 A.D.) the most noteworthy of them, who besides being a great patron of art was converted into Vaishnavism by Srinivasa Acharyya, a close associate of Chaitanya himself. Part and parcel of contemporary manuscripts of the *Ramayana, Bhagavata Purana, Harivamsa, Krishna Kirtan, Gita-Govinda and Chaitanya Charitamrita*, the miniature paintings of the book covers are concerned also with the court scenes of Bir Hambir. Not so well known as the Western Indian Jaina manuscript covers, these series of painted *Patas*—one of the most important collections of the Asutosh Museum—reveal scintillating aspect of the art of Eastern India, specially of late mediaeval Bengal, Orissa and Assam. Undeniable Rajasthani influence, specially of the Jaipur school, clearly manifested in a group of these *Patas* can be explained by the fact that Sri Chaitanya himself encouraged the foundation of a strong centre of Gauriya Vaisnavism in Mathura and Vrindavan closely associated with the sacred exploits of Krisna, by sending some of his devout Vaisnava followers there. It is also said that the *Sadhus* obtained the permission of Jaipur court before they returned to Bengal, apparently with paintings and painted manuscripts of the Jaipur school. When it is acknowledged that the classical music penetrated to Visnupur from northern India it is no wonder Rajasthani painting followed suit. Contact with the outer world during the first period of the Mughal rule (1575-1675 A.D.) possibly opened out another source of penetration in the reverse direction. Maharaja Mansingh of Amber, the famous general of Akbar, who conquered Bengal and Orissa, was for several years the Governor of *Suba* Bengal, may have been accompanied by some artists from home. The palpable influence of Rajasthani paintings on these illustrations of absorbing interest as well as some late *Patas* of Orissa may perhaps also be explained by this historical association. Some impress of the contemporary Malwa school may also be recognised. Taking everything into considereation, the Bengali modification of the Rajasthani version can be easily discerned in the soft sensuous composition, animated movement and an all pervasive sensitive lyrical charm in this particular series. These painted *Patas* have some parallels in Assam, which also passed through a great religious upheaval following the preachings of another Vaishnava teacher, Sankaradeva. They are now preserved in the Kamarupa Anusandhana Samiti, the Gauhati Museum, and the Birla Academy, Calcutta (fig. 64).

A moving pastoral scene from Midnapur (?) is illustrated here in one of the rare representations of Saivite theme (fig. 65), showing Siva on his bull, led by Nandi carrying his *Trisula and Kamandulu*, returning home as indicated by a double storied pavilion containing Parvati, seated on the ground floor, with Ganesa on her lap, eagerly awaiting her mendicant husband's return. Besides the native way in which the domestic touch is so clearly visualised corresponding to Pahari paintings, this example of possible 17th century origin, bearing on it the initial impact of the Rajasthani style, may be of the Malwa variety penetrating from the west, particularly in the way in which the mother and child are conventionally isolated in the pavilion. Three *Patas* of the series under consideration further envisage the mature handling of the Rajasthani idiom. They are indeed pieces of unsurpassed loveliness. Characterised by an unerring sense of draughtsmanship combining bright luminous colours with careful arrangement of balancing figures, the earliest and most important is provided by a *Pata* (fig. 66), describing the historic scene of the first meeting of King Prataparudra of Orissa with Chaitanyadeva, whose ardent disciple he was. To test the devotion of his royal disciple, Chaitanya pres tended to fall into a swoon in the arms of his companion, as soon as he learnt of the royal approach. The king is at first taken aback but does not hesitate to sit down and massage the feet of the Master in order to revive him. In this way the heart of Chaitanya was won over by the royal devotee. Two standing *Yavanas* are conspicuous by their costume-Yavana Haridasa, the Muslim convert on the right end and the Abyssinian guard of the Orissan King on the left reminiscent of similar figure in the famous court scene previously discussed. Perhaps the figure of Ramanuja Rai, the powerful Orissan governor of the Krishna-Godavari doab who was first converted into Vaisnavism by Chaitanya himself, may also be recognised in this historic scene.[1] This bold and vigorous miniature is endowed with a largeness and spaciousness, truly mural in quality. Distinguished by lively tonal varieties, another pair of Bankura *Patas* (fig. 67), of the Krishnalila, are the nearest to the Rajasthani idiom in facial contour of Gopis, dazzling striped and embroidered skirts reminiscent of 17th century Malwa pattern.

In spite of the luxuriant trend and elaborate finish of the pandal the scene of Krishna in Mathura breathes an air of quiet repose through a judicious use of verticals and horizontals keeping up their complementary rhythm against a background of conventional trees and lacqured red associated with Jaipur mannerism also. The scene depicting Krishna lying in a decorated pavilion has close affinity with another similar but much simpler painted book-cover from Visnupur dated 1653 A.D. Unable to bear the pangs of imminent separation the back of the *Pata* shows bands of lamenting swooning Gopis full of impulsive fervour pathetically trying in vain to block the way of the embellised chariot carrying away their beloved Krishna to Dwarka, with Balarama looking ahead, seated at the rear perplexed Krishna attempts to pacify Barai Buri.

According to tradition news reached Bir Hambir of Mallabhum that two cartloads full of valuable treasures, guarded by robbers were passing through the neighbouring dense forests. He at once ordered that the treasure as well as the accompanying guards be brought before him. Srinivasa Acharyya forcibly brought to the court, revealed to the king the real nature of the treasures viz. Vaisnava scriptures that he had brought from Brindavan. A great transformation then took place. The saint was not only freed but his preaching converted the king and his court and subjects to Vaisnavism. Visnupur became a thriving centres of Vaisnava art and architecture, Sanskrit literature and the famous Visnupuri *Gharana* of classical music. The *Pata* is a dramatic representation of the above miracle. It is on record that subsequently some of the Queens of Visnupur themselves composed Vaishnava works.

Breathing an air of love and devotion, an unique *Pata* (fig. 68), obviously from Vishnupur, represents Bir Himbir, seated majestically confronting Srinivasa Acharyya and his bevy of charming buxom queens reinforced overhead by the expending branch of a tree after the Mughal mannerism. With hair of his head treated in flamboyant manner, perhaps to underline his semi-aboriginal martial nature, he is seen assuring his chief queen who intercedes on behalf of the saint represented in a supplicating posture attired in a Chaddar and a Namavali print, head clearly shaved with *Sikha* befitting a humble Vaisnava saint. Delineated with unequalled loveliness the other agitated queens visualised by big lotus petalled eyes, and framed by dangling ringlets of hair, are strongly reminiscent of the poignant grief of the group of Gopis just seen. Also, here, rich and sparkling colours and much enlarged dimensions of the figures spread over the entire background, is not subservient to the emotional content. Apparently painted in the reign of Bir Hambir himself or little later, the present miniature can be easily regarded as a reduced mural with a conspicuous Bengali flavour. In course of time the external influences were quickly assimilated and a peculiar local idiom developed in Bengal both technically and thematically.

Inspired by indigenous formula, another Bankura example, less sophisticated, presumably of the 17th century, has been an object of great attraction. Providing an idea of the lost mural art of late mediaeval Bengal, the universal appeal of this Rasalila piece (fig. 69), rests no doubt on the perfect ease and freedom with which the theme has been handled, specially the way in which the cadence of dance, vigorously reinforced by rhythmic elastic curves and alternating dark, and light patches of the bodies of Krishna and Gopis have been charmingly envisaged. Wavy branches of flowering trees, humming bees and a small prancing antelope indicative of spring fill up the background in an engaging[6] manner. Although more decorative and less restrained on equivalent Krishna and Chaitanyalila set from the collection of the Raja of Ramgarh, Midnapur, surprisingly echoes the style and treatment of the Asutosh Museum *Patas*. Unquestionaly belonging to the Visnupuri *Qalm*, they are charming examples of delicate lyricism describing Radha Krishna in Kunjavana, Rasalilā, Chaitanya and Nityananda, Chaitanya and King Prataparudra and Gosthalila(figs. 70-74). An 18th century Ramabhiseka *Pata* (fig. 75) from Bakura with obvious Bihari faces records degeneration of the style, presaging folk idiom, closely akin in style with the welcoming scene on the wooden manuscripp cover from Kooch Bihar, North Bengal (fig. 76).

Perhaps without parallel in Eastern Indian art, an unique fragmentary painting of extraordinary interest relating to the popular Ramayana theme of the marriage ceremony of Rama and his three brothers. Bharata Lakshmana and Satrughna, had fortunately come into my hands, only a few years ago after my retirement. Inspired by the ecclectic styles Mughal, Rajasthani and regional Bengali with European instrusions, the elaborate and vivid panorama (31cm × 40 cm) undoubtedly belong to the Murshidabad School of late 18th Century A.D. Giving an impression of airy spaciousness, the parallel horizontal three tier composition recalling Rajasthani treatment of Ramayana and Bhagavat Purana scenes, is indicative of the third dimensional tilted plane according to ancient Indian formula. The upper row strikingly depicts, the train of four canopied, pavilions containing the four brothers, one after another holding the hands of their respective demure brides, regally attired, but with conventional faces. Each couple flanked by ladies, draped according to Mughal fashion, hold the usual flywhisks. Typical Bengali touch is provided by the auspicious plantain trees in the far background, the crowning *Ghata* finials of the canopies and tapering golden *Kalasas*, containing sacred water, successively placed between them to enahance the decorative effect. Ranged above the heads of the bridal couples, string of hanging glass lamps are obiously of East India, Company vintage. The intermediate area between the upper and lower most rows is occupied by faithfully depicted figures of gods Bramha, Siva and Ganesha, seated on the left side, facing seperate groups of chanting sages, conducting the marriage ceremony. Further indicating a sense of depth the broken lines of the assemblage of diademed royalties invited to witness the marriage of the Avataras of Visnu are squatting below in the traditional Indian way. Although worn out, this composition of extreme solemnity and grandeur is visualised by soothing, harmonius colours specially light green complimented by linear flexibility of extreme refinement (col. pl. 13).

Finally it may be added here that the Krishnalila scenes were also pictorial translations of the Vaisnava *Padabali's* of the favourite poets Vidyapati, Chandidas, Govindadas and others.

Nineteenth century saw the gradual fading away of the mediaeval, Mughal, Rajasthani and other trends and emergence of the typical folk idiom in Bengal, sometimes reminiscent of past techniques. In modern Orissan folk painting on the other hand stress on Eastern Indian accents is still being laid to a surprising degree.

REFERENCES

1. Saraswati, S.K., *op. cit.* pls. 122, 134, 137.
2. French, J.C. "Land of Wrestlers", Indian Art and London, 1927, Vol. I, No.1, p. 18.
3. The charming double page coloured reproduction of this particular Pata may consulted in "Great centres Art"—Calcutta, Leipzig, 1973 pp. 80-81.
4. Compare the illustration of Gouri Ragini of Malwa School of about 1680 in Barrett and Grey, Painting of India, p. 153. Later examples from an illustrated manuscript of Sakuntala, dated 1789 A.D. Lalit Kala, Nos. 1-2, pl. D and specially the almost contemporary specimener from an illuminated Gita Govinda from Bengal, JISOA. Vol. II, no. 2, pls. XL-XLIV typically Bengal.
5. French *op. cit.* pl. Va.
6. Ashton, The art of India and Pakistan, pl. 79.

CHAPTER VI

AN ILLUSTRATED RAMAYANA MANUSCRIPT OF TULSIDASA

In 1942, during the course of my tour in the Murshidabad district in Bengal, I came across an illuminated 'Ramacharita Manasa' or Hindi Ramayana by Tulsidasa.[1] To my knowledge this is the only fully illustrated Ramayana manuscript found in Bengal. Containing 152 multicoloured illustrations the manuscript of 342 pages is complete in 8 *Kandas*, except the last few pages. Written on paper by Dwija Ichchharama Misra for the study of Rani Janaki Devi of Mahisadal Raj Estate, Dist. Midnapore, we learn from the colophons at the end of each of the cantos that the work took three years to be completed from Saka 1964 to 1967 (1772-75 A.D.). Although written in Hindi by the Prayag Brahman, apparently the *Kula Purohita*, for the edification of his princely patron, the illustrations are apparently the work of local Midnapore artists or the pseudo Mughal artists of Murshidabad. Some of the last pages subsequently replaced, in a decadent handwriting, are without pictures. The style of the paintings shows a marked variety in the earlier and later groups denoting the employment of more than one artist. The script on each page (size 9¾″ × 12¼″) fills varied geometric patterns within the coloured borders as in Mughal manuscripts.

Seven illustrations are reproduced here. Including the frontispiece, envisages the opening passage of the *Adikanda* when the sage Narada on his usual round of paying homage to Visnu visits Vaikunthapuri and is surprised to find there instead of Visnu, Rama enthroned and attended by his three brothers, Sita and Hanuman. Obviously perplexed he seeks the help of Siva who explains that this peculiar manifestation of Visnu foreshadows his impending birth on earth as Rama *Avatara* to free the world from the depredations of Ravana (fig. 77).

In this scene Rama is seated in the *Virasana* on a throne in the form of a *Pitha* with Sita behind, an attendant in front presumably Lakshana holding the royal fan with Hanuman seated in adoration at his feet. Bharata and Satrughna are missing. The setting denotes a royal pavilion with three towers and flags proudly fluttering in the wind across and beyond the frame in a vigorous way. The composition recalls a similar contemporary Orissan palm-leaf painting.[2] Very few colours, indigo, dull green, yellow ochre, and light red produce a sober tone. Indication of the drapery by double and triple lines is a noteworthy feature.

The familiar legend of Bhagiratha is illustrated in (fig. 78). Bhagiratha was successful inspite of heartbreaking obstacles in persuading the goddess Ganga to descend on earth from heaven to resurrect by a touch of her sacred waters, sixty thousand of his predecessors turned into ashes through a curse. He is seen here proudly leading the way in the chariot of Brahma, blowing the conch-shell (here represented as a horned bugle) and ringing the bell, with Ganga represented in rolling waves, docilely following the chariot wheels. This panel is set in the middle of the respective page. A forceful compositional sweep describes the descent and forward movement of the procession. In the chariot portion, pink and light red predominate, interspersed with indigo, dull green and yellow ochre.[3] The river waters at the back are depicted by waves in a gradation of shades of indigo merging into pink and white with a thin ribbon of light red connecting the two portions of the picture.[4]

An interesting episode in the third day's battle between Rama and Ravana is shown in (fig. 79). The chariot specially sent by Indra for the occasion and supporting the divine brothers Rama and Laksmana rushes furiously at Ravana's which is without horses but is adorned with a *Makara* head. Rama makes desperate efforts to kill Ravana apparently invincible, aiming a javelin against him. He cuts all his ten heads and twenty hands hundred times, but each time the decapitated limbs go up and rejoin the trunk of Ravana through the boon granted by Brahma making him immortal. The towering figure of the demon king hurling defiance at the futile attempts of his diminutive adversaries, the chariots, as well as the string of magic heads encircling Ravana like an enormous halo, decapitated hands surging upwards, violent gestures of the contending parties all go to make the picture a piece of dramatic movement.

The happy reunion between Bharata and Rama on the way to Ayodhya is the theme of (fig. 80). Rama tenderly stoops down to lift up the sorrowing Bharata, who at the sudden return of the exiled brother, has fallen at his feet. Sita and Laksmana, standing behind followed by Hanuman, raise their arms in greeting. A rambling, flowering plant freely covering the upper space, emphasises the diagonal composition of the figures, instead of the Iranian and pseudo-Mughal usage of heavily bending corner trees.

Two horizontal panels breathing opposite rythms but enchanting compositions are represented (fig. 81) (1) by the group delineating the critical moment of the meeting of Rama & Sita in Asoka forest, expressing placid charm and restrained balance through the employment of parallel vertical strokes denoted by standing figures of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and her two female attendants divided by elongated flowering trees-some traditional and others strongly evocative of Mughal convention. (2) The second one vivaceously deliniates the famous incident of Jatayu trying to devour the chariot of Ravana eloping with Sita. It is indeed a picture of dynamic action enlivened by the vibrant colouring of body and upturned multicoloured tail of the great bird relieved by the delicate flowering plants of Mughal origin, on both the flanks (fig. 82).

The dignity and solemnity of the occasion of the marriage of Rama with Sita being given away by king Janaka (fig. 84), movingly depicted by a decorated pandal in the centre, fringed by two respective parallel strips containing two seated compact rows of blessing Rishis above and royalties below who have come to witness the magnificent scene is a composition of dramatic importance reminiscent of Andhra, Orissa and Nepalese pictorial rendering. An equally dramatic scene (fig. 83) of four Rishis with pointed beards and flowing *Jatas* reminiscent of Paithana *patas*, churning the vessel out of which Sita was finally born, is notable for the active movements of the figures in varying contrasting colours.

A continuation and elaboration of the reunion scene, after the return of the exiled party, is shown on (fig. 85). It is a full page illustration divided into three horizontal panels filled with standing figures. The figure of Rama is repeatedly shown, yet clad in his exile dress, alternates with the adoring figures of his brothers and other dear and near ones whom he joyously greets. Vivacious couples are pitted against each other, princely figures in flowing Muslim spotted robes; yellow, or dark indigo, bare bodied yellow figures clad in dark indigo cloths are contrasted with the green body of Rama.

The humiliation of invincible Ravana—flushed with vanity at the boon of immortality conferred upon him by Brahma—at the hands of Bali, the king of monkeys, is depicted with great vigour in (col. pl. 8) Bali grapples with the demon king, fastened in his tail, and ducks him heartily in the four oceans, the waves of which are probably indicated by the conventional patterns in curling blue and white fringing the panel.[5] Sharp jagged and diagonal lines denote the powerless form of Ravana and the striding figure of Bali. A shallow sweeping arch above unites the rugged movements of the component parts of the picture.

A miraculous incident in the life of Rama as a child with reference to the hoary crow Bhusandi is also illustrated. The gradation of colours as in the case of the water, above holds good also for the sky.

The paintings of the manuscript by the Midnapur artists are fore-runners of the indigenous *Pata* style of Bengal. Although betraying strong Orissan influence and reminiscent of Mughal and mediaeval Indian conventions, all the elements of folk art are present—story telling purpose, vivid colours, determined brush strokes and broad summary execution. Bold Devanagari characters of the text play their part in the general scheme of the pages. The figures are outlined against a white background; they form part of groups. Broad undulating curves of the *Sari* drawn around the heads of women outlining their projecting chignons, recall the convention found in the Amaru Sataka manuscript from Mayurbhanj, an Orissa state close to the borders of Midnapur.[6] Elliptical eyes extended to the ear, correspond to contemporary renderings on palm-leaf and paper in Orissa and do not follow the Western Indian mannerism. The figures here are also shown in combined profile and front view. But instead of the supple Orissan forms they are compact and firm. The strength and vitality of the Orissan style is blended with the suavity of Bengal in this remarkable series of manuscript paintings, legacy of the Eastern Indian idiom.

Prof. S.K. Saraswati communicated the following about an illustrated Bengali manuscript of the Bhagavata Purana in (his collection claimed to be the earliest) dated Saka 1611/A.D. 1689.

"The advent of Sri Chaitanya and the rise of Gaudiya Vaishnavism appeared to have afforded a new impetus to artistic and literary persuit in Bengal. Of the former, numerous documents have been found and are preserved in private and public collections. These are mostly painted covers, unfortunately wrenched from their original contents with the result that their dates are in a manner, matters of surmise and speculation. The Asiatic society, Calcutta has a Ms. of Harivamsa, copied in Saka 1401/A.D. 1479 of which the covers only bear traces of illustration mostly effaced."

"In this situation the present manuscript, now in a private collection, gains a new dimension. It was copied in Saka 1611/A.D. 1689 (*indvindu shashthendu mite sakabde*). It was written on country made paper and consists of 203 folios measuring approximately 35 cm × 11.5 cm. Nearly half of the folios bear figural illustrations of the various episodes of Krishna's life as described in the Bhagavata, while the remaining have floral, vegetal and other motifs. Besides, one wooden cover has illustrations on both sides. The paintings are in a simple and naive style, showing an economy in linear as well as colour treatment, and stand apart from the style seen in other documents. This fact and the definite date it bears make it, perhaps, the most important document in mediaeval Bengali painting. In a manner, the illustrations seem to anticipate the style of subsequent Kalighat painting. Asiatic society Monthly Bulletin, March, 1974.

"According to Prof. Saraswati the illustrations seem to anticipate the style of subsequent Kalighat painting. But there is no doubt that the paintings just anticipate the style and mannerism of Tulsidasa Ramacharita Manasa dated 1772-75 A.D. in the Asutosh Museum collection as I have personally examined the Bhagabata Purana dated 1689 A.D. They have no connextion with the Kalighat paintings as opined by Prof. Saraswati. The forms are typically mediaeval with jagged angulor lines quit a unlike the broad sweeping curves of Kalighat miniatures".

REFERENCES

1. I was successful in persuading Sri Ramdas Aulia, Mohant of the famous Vaisnavite establishment (*Akhara*), of Sadhakbag, Dt. Murshidabad the owner of the manuscript, to present it to the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University. I am grateful to the Mohant for the generous gift of this remarkable record.
2. J. I. S. O. A. Vol. IX, 1941, pl. XVI.
3. The Chariot wheels, joined with an axle is a distinctive feature of Bengal not found anywhere else, conclusively proving that the illustrations of the manuscript were painted by a Bengali artist and not by an outsider as guessed by some.
4. The mannerism of showing the waves of the Ganga correspond to the similar treatment of the waves of the Yamuna in the 17th century Krisnalila Pat in the Gurusaday Museum, Calcutta. The colour schemes are also surprisingly same-G.S. Dutt, The Indegenous painters of Bengal, J. I. S. O. A. Vol. I, 1933, pl. V. fig. 2.
5. They correspond almost exactly to abstract treatment of clouds in the Balibadh scene of 18th century Ramayana *Pat* from Murshidabad in the South Kensington Museum, London—W.G. Archer, Kalighat Paintings, pl. 88, London, 1971. This had led some scholars to guess that the Ramacharita paintings were probably painted by Pseudo Mughal—Murshidabad artists and not by the Midnapur *Patuas*.
6. J.I.S.O.A., Vol. VIII, 1940, pl. V, 3.

CHAPTER VII

HERITAGE OF INDIAN *PATS*

There is a general misconception in the public mind that the *Pats*, specially of Bengal, are of recent origin. They cannot claim to be older than, at best, a century. It is also believed that *Pats* are confined only to Bengal. Many people may be surprised to learn that not one or two hundred years ago, but two thousand and five hundred years ago, scroll painting or panel painting was widely used in many parts of India as a mass media for enjoyment, general education and religious practices. During my researches on the subject this came as a revelation to me. It has been discovered from the life of Jaina *Tirthankara* that Gosala Mankhaliputta, a contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira in the 6th century B.C. was himself the son of a mere *Patua*, or folk artist, before he became the famous founder of the Ajivaka sect. In Pali, *Mankha* signified a "*Patakar*", "*Pattikar*" or "*Patua*" whose hereditary profession was that of a wandering minstrel. Before he adopted the *Sannyasa Dharma*, Gosala, following his paternal profession, eked out his living by demonstrating the *Pats*, not only to the villagers of Nalanda, where he was born, but to the citizens of the adjacent imperial city of Rajagriha, in Magadha.

Besides this we get remarkable testimony about *Pat* and *Patuas* from the *Astadhyyai* of Panini of the 4th century B.C. Panini has clearly pointed out about the existence in his times of two different classes of artists : (1) *Gramasilpi*, or village artists, who catered only to the needs of the rural folk by producing in large scale visual images in painting, stone, terracotta, etc. and (2) *Rajasilpi*, or court artists, who worked leisurely under the patronage of kings, courtiers and the aristocracy, dictated by their tastes, fashions and fancies. From this statement of Panini, we learn of the simultaneous prevalence of two different idioms of arts even in very ancient times. They are also envisaged in two varying art styles of the Mauryya art of Emperor Ashoka of the 3rd Century B.C. and the Sunga art of Bharhut in the succeeding century—one Court and the other manifestly Popular. Not only that, Patanjali in his *Mahabhasya* has vividly described how the folk artists used to depict the episode of "*Kansabadha*" with the help of long scrolls on the wayside. In ancient Jaina and Buddhist literature also these group of artists were known as *Soubhika* or *Sobhaanika*.

That the *Pats* originated at a very early period is also attested by the fact that Gautama Buddha once highly admired a painting called '*Charana-Chitta*'. Explaining the commentary of Buddha, Buddhoghosa of the 1st century A.D. signified '*Charana-Chitta*' as an interesting type of painting in which one picture goes below the other. In the arrangement of a regular succession of rectangular panels of the gateways of Bharhut and Sanchi, we find a remarkable translation in stone of the idea of '*Charana-Chitta*'. Throughout the ages, even to the present day, the gradual unfolding of the story, Hindu, Buddhist or Jaina, in a cinematic way, the traditional method of the '*Charana-Chitta*' is reflected in the *Patachitras* of Bengal. The antiquity of this mode of visual education is further corroborated by the frequent mention of this type of picture show in many eminent works of Sanskrit literature, specially in *Mudrarakshasa* of Visakhadatta and *Harshacharita* of Banabhatta. We are indeed surprised to have literary evidence of the survival of the technique of the wayside folk dramatist, who specialised in entertaining the public in the open, even in the 8th century A.D. Banabhatta says, Harshavardhana, while entering the city of Thanesvar, saw a "*Pattikara*" speaking about Yama, the God of Death, seated on a fierce looking buffalo and pointing to the picture of Yama with a stick in his right hand. The picture was painted on a scroll, suspended from the left hand of the "*Pattikara*", who in course of his demonstration was singing a song in connection with the *Yamapatta*. Even to this day a West Bengal *Patua* is simultaneously a painter, singer and balled writer demonstrating to the village folk in the age old manner.

So these "*Mankhas*" no doubt played an effective part in the cultural complex of Ancient India, disseminating general as well as moral and spiritual knowledge for the masses. In the 4th century A.D. during his soujourn to Ceylon, Fa-hien the famous Chinese pilgrim noticed *Patas* hanging from wayside posts during religious celebrations. That significant parts these Buddhist *Pats* ployed in Inermost Asia is singularly evidenced by the migration of typically indegenous Indian *Pats* outside India also.

A mural panel from Qyzil, Chinese Turkestan, (*c.* 6th century A.D.) depicting very skillfully the story of how king Ajatasatru of Magadha, learnt of Buddha's *Parinirvana*, in an amazing way. King Ajatasatru, was a devoted desciple of Buddha. Once when he was holding his court, news reached of the passing away of the Master. But none of his courtiers dared to break the terrible news to the king. So they deviced a clever plan. To prevent or soften the inevitable nervous shock the King was to suffer, they first ingenuously put him in a jar of butter, then the Chief Minister silently dangled before his eyes a painted "*Chaumukh*" *Pat* represented with four principal events of Buddha's life viz. birth, attainment of Buddhahood, first sermon at Sarnath and lastly his *Parinivana*. The last scene was self explanatory and the king is shown in the second part of the mural as throwing up his hands in utter dismay. It may be added here that the two parts of the mural are treated rather hieritically according to rigid Central Asian convention as opposed to the lyrical grace of the Buddha *Pat* on cloth expressed by flowing sensitive lines, typically characteristic of Ajanta style, betraying its definite Indian origin.[1] There are many instances to show that the Indian Buddhist teachers proceeding to Greater India or foreign pilgrims returning to their respective countries after their sojourn to India, carried with them travelling museums consisting of large varieties of cultural heritage of India including portable antiquities and illuminated manuscripts of exquisite quality, to far off lands in Central, Northern and South-Eastern Asia.

Modern *Pats* in West Bengal are generally of two varieties, one belonging to the scroll type and the other to the usual rectangular type popular in the rest of India. The scroll type, also known as "*Jarano Pat*", is more familiar. These *Pats* were most probably known as "*Yamapatta*" in the early period. Even now the tradition is maintained in the generic name. "*Yamapat*" by which term these scrolls are known. The name is derived from the fact that most of the *Pats* show, besides the main themes taken either from mythological or epic sources viz. Ramayana, Krishnalila, Chaitanyalila, Manasa, Naramedha *Jagnya*, etc., (including Gazi *Pats* in Comilla, Faridpur and Barisal in Bangladesh), panels at the end depict scenes wherein there are representations of Yama and his terrible entourage of ghosts carrying out various punishments to people after death for their sins on earth. The motive of this type of representation was to create moral impression upon the mind of the rural people regarding the evil consequences of sin so that they may not commit sins in life. Most of the *Patuas*, who not only painted Muslim Gazi *Pats* but also stories from Hindu legends and mythologies are, however, now converted Muslims by faith. In Orissa the "*Chitrakaras*," mainly with the surname *Maharana*, and *Sutradhara* (carpenter by caste) confine themselves in depicting in panels episodes from Krishnalila and Ramalila, as well as particular divinities, besides their favourite Jagannatha. In addition, the scrolls of a very interesting class of *Patuas* called "*Jadu Patuas*" are comparatively narrower and smaller, painted by some tribal people of western and eastern Bengal like Santhals Bhumijas and Bediyas. Of magical significance, they are also known as "*Chakshudana Pat*."

Generally using primary colours such as white, red, indigo, yellow and black prepared from mineral and vegetable colours and by mixing them with the paste of boiled tamarind seeds, the *Patuas* paint directly on paper or on cloth upon which the paper is pasted.

Only a few years ago there was a popular notion that *Pats* specially "*Jarano Pats*," were unknown as important elements of folk culture, beyond the confines of Bengal. We have already pointed out that from the very remote times *Pat* was an important audio-visual medium for the dissemination of cultural, moral and religious ideas throughout India. Recent investigations have also revealed widespread use of *Pats* even in modern times in different regions of India, in different idioms, beside the popular use of unsophisticated *Pats* by the Jains, Hindus and Buddhists, both inside the country, as well as outside in Central Asia and South East Asia, specially by the two latter religious denominations in ages gone by.

As fascinating examples of folk art, vividly illuminated *Pats* painted mainly on cloth with sweeping continuous lines have been discovered in Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Paithan in Maharashtra, Warangal, Nagagopta and Cuddapah in Andhra Pradesh and Tanjore in the South. Among them the *Vignaptipatras* of Rajasthan *Papuji-Ka-Pad* of Nathadwara and the Jaina line drawings *Purushakara Yantras* of Gujarat are more famous. In Orissa the typical "*Jarano Pat*" of Bengal is unknown. Following the southern custom, the familiar Puri *Pats* are made of cloth pasted together in layers and stiffened into single rectangular panels and have themes invariably dipicting single episodes or a succession of events. In Warangal, however, there is surprising evidence of scroll paintings on West Bengal parallels.

REFERENCES

1. Heinrich Zimmer—*The Art of Indian Asia*, New York. 1955, Vol. II, pl. 612, including separate detail of the *Pat*.

CHAPTER VIII

ORISSAN PATS AND PAINTINGS—LATE MIDIAEVAL AND MODERN

Nowhere in India has the folkmind expressed itself in such lavish and colourful scale as in Orissa. Denied expression in major branches of temple sculpture and architecture, the artistic impulses of the people of Orissa seem to have flowed mainly in minor arts and crafts e.g. soapstone carvings, exquisite devices in horn, metal and wood, mural paintings of extraordinary vigour and boldness (now almost lost) and miniature paintings of unrivalled delicacy and decorative charm. Following general cultural pattern in India, the visual arts in the rural areas are invariably used for conveying religious instructions to the people and invoking religious sentiment. Mainly narrative in character, the themes and characters generally evoke *Santa Rasa*, without neglecting *Vira* or *Ugrarasa*.

"The folk-arts, as it exists in Orissan villages to-day is closely associated with the ritualistic practices of folk religion. Preponderantly a Vaisnava land, the paintings mainly concern themselves with the elaborate ceremonies connected with the worship and propitiation of Jagannatha. Krisnalila and Bhagavat Purana supplies the other favourite subjects greatly in vogue. Orissan life is governed, not only by Vaisnavism but to a large extent, by folk religion as well. Murals on village homes depict auspicious symbols, deities and sometimes legendary seenes that are supposed to control diseases, bring good or bad luck and govern natural phenomena.

"Beyond India the paintings of the Orissa folk-painters are almost unknown, and in Orissa itself they have been up to the present time a part of the Jagannatha cult, making such an inseparable accompaniment to everyday life in the surroundings of the main shrine in Puri, that the very idea of a public exposition of a collection of folk paintings there would seem absurd. Actually, samples of Orissa folklore can be found only very rarely in the museums or collections of connoiseurs of Indian art in other regions of India; although they may be found in the dwellings of villagers who had taken part in religious pilgrimages to Puri and who had brought them back as souvenirs of the Trinity from Jagannatha's shrine. The only exception is Calcutta where the treasures not only of Bengal but also those of Orissa and Bihar folk-art have been preserved mainly in the Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art which is a part of Calcutta University. Beautiful samples of Orissa paintings from the earlier and later period are included in my extensive collection."

"From the rich abundance of Indian art many jewels of the ancient and present art have been kept hidden up to the present time; only recently a valuable category of folk-art, which is unusually interesting from the artistic and historical point of view, has begun to emerge, a sphere offering numerous new discoveries and surprises. It is undoubtedly connected with the new approach and exploring methods of our time that embrace reality in its entirely and discovers an important starting point for probing into the evolution and life of human society in the anonymous artefact of the popular masses. On the other hand the political independence of India, which has not yet reached its second decade, has proved to be a mighty stimulus throughout the extent of its cultural life. Scores of Indian communities are passing through their national awakening, they look back into the past and, simultaneously, into the future, they, conscious of ancient tradition, claim their cultural heritage and are aware of everything that has formed their specific character and by which they differ from other nations. This climate fosters an interest for creative folklore which is an important element in national art as well as in religious traditions, and above all, it is the authentic source of the cultural, social and political history of the country."[1] Parallel to the artistic trend of Bengal there is a marked intrusion of Rajasthani vocabulary in Orissan painting in the 18th century. Steeped in

Rajasthani idiom, the local style is characterised by greater emphasis on formalisation, clearly marked colour areas, defining figure composition and an overall sense of fastidious ornament, in contrast to the relaxed modulated linear treatment and suavity of colours of contemporary *Pats* of West Bengal. The choice of subjects is invariably limited to religious topics of the Epics and mythology of the Puranas. Unlike Bengal parallels, the *Pats* are sometimes fringed with broad patterns of tempered gradation of colour leaving the central space to the depiction of Krishnalila themes in glowing lacquer red, symbolical of divine grace. Densely compact images outlined in emphatic profiles manage to weave composite networks of figures, animals, flowers and other motifs in a limited palette mostly black and white, red, green, yellow and indigo blue. Radha, Krisna and Gopis are delineated in round contours and flowing lines balanced by pointed projections of scarfs, invariably characterised by overwhelming sense of ornamentation (fig. 49). In contrast the lavish decoration of the Krishnalila manuscript covers of *Rasa* and *Gostha* from Khallikote Ganjam in the Asutosh Museum mentioned above another profound example of the same school visualising the heavy massive white body of *Kamadhenu* (wish fulfilling milk cow) outlines in heaving lines of the upturned tail balanced by the complacent looking yellow women head adorned with appropriate jewellery, presents an indegenous picture of female grace due to the happy combination of volume and space relieved by delicate ornamental borders (fig. 51). Mention may be made of an additional pair of striking *Pats* from Puri district (1) a vividly portrayed Visnu Anantasajjya resting on the coiled bed of the multiple hooded *Adishesa*; Lakshmi massaging his feet, strangely reminiscent of the colossal fresco of the Jagannatha temple corridor, obviously modelled on the South Indian version. Delicate parallel lines of drapery and pillow emphasise the flat two dimensional aspect. (2) The comparatively modern ingeneous design of an oblong *Pata* delineating the intricately entwined Naga couple embracing each other, crowned by a manyhooded cobra is mainly emphasised in blue. Reflecting the inventive ingenous folk mind, the prevailing colour scheme of dark green, yellow predominating against red background contributed to the forceful composition, recalling identical pattern of Pala stone sculpture of Bengal as well as the remarkable mediaeval temple sculptures of Bhuvaneswar (fig. 53).

In terms of sheer energy and buoyancy, folk art has an unfailing edge over other kinds of painting. Reflecting a mental outlook of uninhibited commitment and assertiveness the restrictions it abide by are of forms and format, a fact which explains its rigorous stylisation. As opposed to the scroll paintings (*Jarano Pat*) of Bengal, modern Orissan *Pat* strictly adheres to a square or rectangular frame. The *Pat* painting of Orissa is mainly a tradition of the coastal districts of Puri & Ganjam.

Standing on a lotus pedestal a superb six handed dancing Ganesha, of the early 19th century presage complete transformation to folk idiom characterised by broad spacious treatment, elaborate mauve ornamentation, and soothing colours in pale blue, light red and white, was formerly in my private collection, now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi (fig. 39). Emerging out of sober background in pink and mauve; crowned and sparsely decorated with chaste but intricate jwellery the mobile Ganesha, a conspicuous combination of space and volume, is shown dancing gaily with massive slightly tilted head, poised on a bulky bulging torso framed by angular feet and outstretched hands. Inspite of agile whirling movement of dance convulsing the image, the artist has been highly successful in expressing a sense of static rest by the judicious clockwise and anti-clockwise circular movement of symmetrically disposed limbs, including the halo like serpent, held above the head echoing the foliated *Makara Torana*. Firm undulating lines of the voluptuous body has contributed greatly to the attractive poise of elephant headed Ganesha, a Hindu iconographic conception rivalling perhaps all the other authropomorpic representations of the world in homogeneous integration. It is flanked on either side by a devotee with a fly whisk and a mouse, the favourite mount of the vivacious god of wisdom in quaint rhythm.

A remarkable *Pata* on a piece of ordinary plywood showing Saraswati seated in graceful repose holding a palm-leaf manuscript in one hand and a *Vina* in another against an unusual background of deep green bestrewn with flowers, an image visualised in quite another flavour (fig. 40). With the disposition of white limbs and spotted drapery within a rectrangular frame-work, the upright imagery summons up in its resonances with its attachment of emphatic edges filled up with colours in sensitive relationship, counters any effect of total flatness, considering the scheme of spreading on demarcated areas of colour all over the surface. The ancient "*Chitrasutra*, the standard text of the principle of painting emphasises the necessity of excellence in line drawing followed by appropiate manipulation of colour and the expression of emotion.[2]

A striking Durga Mahisamardini *Pat* of great dignity and force prepared for me by the master artist Chintamani Mahapatra of Dolmandap Shahi leading to the great temple of Puri, was my first collection of Orissan art in 1939 characterised by a profile face, hooked nose and double chin according to eastern Indian tradition. It is now in the National Museum, New Delhi (fig. 41).

The crowned *Dasabhuja* (ten handed) goddess of over powering stature fully bejwelled and weilding appropiate offensive weapons in each hand, stridently balance herself on the diminutive figure of a lion her mount and the attacking demon Mahisasura who is emerging out of the decapitated head of the buffalo. Filling up the entire space the goddess is an epitome of indomitable energy (*Shakti*), bent upon destroying all evil forces in contrasting colours of red, yellow and white dwarfing all accessory figures. In the present times there is a regrettable tendency of the clay modellers of West Bengal, during *Durga Puja* celebrations, of enlarging the dimensions of ferocious realistic lions and *Asuras* at the expense of the main diety contrary to the injunction of the Slipa sastras.[3] According to old tradition different scales and proportions have been prescribed for different classes of images viz. (1) *Nara Murti* (human)—ten *talas* (2) *Krura Murti* (fierce, martial and aggressive)—sixteen *talas*.[4] Born in the 19th century late Chintamani Mahapatra was a versetile artist. He was proficient in painting, clay modelling, stone carving as well as doll making (*Sakhi*) in pith (*Sola*). His gigantic and magnificient Durga images in clay profusely decorated by *Sola* and tinsel ornaments used to overwhelm visitors during the Puja celebrations every year in Baradanda, Puri.

Folk imagination of the Oriya *Patua* is credited with several fantastic creations of profound value. *Visvarupa Darshana* is one such intriguing and complicated piece of unparalled ingenuity. At the begining of the Kurukhsetra war of the Mahabharata between the Pandavas and Kauravas, Arjuna is appalled at the thought of killing countless number of kith and kin of the opposing Kauravas—(Mahabharata, Bhishma Parva), remorsefully sits down on the chariot discarding his mighty bow and arrows. To rouse him from his fatal stupor Krisna, his charioteer was forced to propound the famous *Gitarahasya* emphasising the transitional nature of all phenomenon and his own all embracing divine entity. To enforce the doctrine of *Yoga and Karmaphala*, he assumed the spectacular form of *Visvarupa* comprising of an unique creature (fig. 42) composed of constituent elements of the cosmic world. Arjuna is amazed and overpowered by gazing at Visvarupa spanning the entire universe, prays to him and at last at the command of Krisna agreed to assume fighting, realizing the utter futility of all mortal existence. The Oriya folk artist has very cleverly and skillfully envisages the fantastic form of Visvarupa by integrating the varying limbs of all creatures viz., agile blue neck of a terrific peacock balanced by a curving tail of a hissing snake, reddish hump of a bull, white tapering leonine body supported by a pair of brown leg of a deer, and yellow spotted leg of a tiger behind and the advancing blue leg of an elephant paired by a projecting ornamental human hand in yellow holding the *Chakra*, indicative of the divine presence of Visnu himself. Reminiscent of Gothic stained glass abewitching form of multicoloured areas integrated homogeneously, it is indeed a creature of unbelievable force through the clever use of sparkling colours, rhythmic curves and encircling creepers projecting the gigantic creature (cp. Bir Hambira & Srinivasacharya *Pata* of Visnupur) effectively against the erect but submissive diminutive form of Arjuna in princely attire, the unknown artist of Puri has been successful in portraying a powerful design full of symbolism and mystery.

Another fantastic creation (fig. 43) *Navanarigunjara,* nine naked Gopis in the shape of an elephant, carrying on its back the Mahout, Radha and Krisna playing on flute painted by Rama Maharana is an intricate product of subtle imagination. Elongated figures of the damsels in glimmering yellow and red, typically expressing the folk language, is summarily treated with the spaces in between, filled up with blazing indigo patches. A far superior execution of the multicoloured *Navanarigunjara scene* is provided by a Krisnalila scroll from Bankura probably of the 17th century A.D. which depicts Krisna playing on a flute in a seated posture on the back of an elephant simulated by nine Gopis who have cleverly disposed themselves in a mutually interlocked position as to create a complete illusion of an elephant.[5] The peculiar conception also finds an echo in the masterly treated terracotta Navanarigunjara in the Shyama Rai Temple relief, Visnupur, of the 17th century where the composition is much more compact revealing the ponderous gait of the promenading elephant.[6] Parallels are offered by a similar frescoe in the Dalada Maligawain, Kandy, Ceylon,[7] and the Rajasthani erotic painting of a prince gaily riding a horse composed of nine nude girls of exquisite beauty. Another low relief sculpture in Vijayanagar also evidently prove the acrobatic activities of Indian women.

Three other modern paintings like the three pieces described above formerly in my personal collection, now in the National Museum, New Delhi, consist of (a) Kaliyadamana scene, by Krisna Maharana of Ganjam (fig. 44) unlike similar Hill Paintings of the 17th-18th century A.D. representing romantic atmospheric background filled by slim slender figures, the space in the Orissan Pat is covered with parallel pairs of voluptuous Nagakanyas, praying to triumphant Krisna dancing gaily on the voluminous multiple headed snake Kaliya encircling him. Inspite of vivid colouring the composition, mainly perpendicular and horizontal, recalling Vastraharana scenes, the typical folk medium is pronouncedly flat, because of the entire space being occupied by bending corner trees and flowers above, responded by small fishes frolicking in the blue waters of the river Yamuna below. (b) A two dimensional impression is also conveyed by an old unfinished *Hasti-Ratha Pat*, (chariot drawn by elephant), showing summary treatment of figures in bold vital lines defining broad areas of soothing colours, undecorated yet pleasing (fig. 43).

"Folk-painting has been considerably widespread in India up to the present time even though its many specific genres have been dying out or already belong to the past. The lack of markets, the composition of cheap colour prints with which the German lithographers flooded the Indian market as early as the end of the last century, and last but not least, various economic changes in the Indian countryside have led to the fact that their traditional style and art-form have ceased to exist with the last folk-painters. That was the fate of the Kalighat paintings the production of which reached its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries in the milieu of the town of Calcutta; the same applies to the "*Jaranopatas*", the Bengali folk-paintings telling whole stories in the form of rolled paper strips which gradually disappeared as did many others. Ornamental or figural paintings on the walls of houses and huts, which can be seen almost wherever there are buildings of mud or bricks, were comparatively well preserved from the effect of these influences, Elsewhere the folk-artist paints on wood, cloth, the surface of earthenware vessels or on paper, eventually on newsprint. From Andhra and Mysore come the gaily painted flat puppets made of leather, employed in the shadow-plays similar to the Javanese shadow puppets."

"Among all the known sorts of Indian folk-paintings the pictures done by the folk-artists from Orissa are outstanding, arising from their entirely different character defined by its long uninterruped tradition and by their distinctive creative sources as well as by their specific expression. Professor O. C. Gangoly, one of the few Indian art historians who devoted at least some attention to the Orissa folk-painting, claims that they are 'not only unique in the history of Indian painting but are unparallelled in the history of any form of European painting. By virtue of their strange and fantastic pictorial conceptions, their peculiar and idiosyncratic conventions, their strange and summary system of line formulations, and their delibaretely wayward colour-schemes almost confined to three or four tones of bright primitive tints, they stay quite by themselves and bear no affinity to any other schools of painting either in or outside India. The Orissa folk-paintings originated and developed in connection with Jagannath's cult and his main shrine—the temple complex in the coastal townlet Puri in Orissa. To-day the God Jagannath—the Lord of the World—is considered to be one of the reincarnations of the God Vishnu but most probably he was the deity of old tribal Pre-Aryan origin that might have been assimilated by Hinduism, having been firmly rooted in the indigenous soil, and owing to its social vitality and popularity among the people has entered into its Pantheon. The folk-art of Orissa, one of the most important focusses of ancient Indian civilization, has always been in close relationship to the art of adivasis of Orissa, descendants of the original aborigines of the country who inhabit hardly accessible primoval forests of the Orissa interior up till the present time in fairly great numbers and in some cases, are still living at the level of the clans. Continual mutual influence can be traced here. It is sufficient, however, to have a look at the suggestive and toeem-like appearance of Jagannath, as it is represented on iconographic paintings, to feel its tribal origin."

"The Vishnu cult of Jagannatha was spread throughout the vast expanse of India and from the 12th century onwards when a huge temple was erected to him in Puri—an influx of thousands of Hindus from a far continue their pilgrimage. Jagannatha Puri—Jagannath's town became one of the most frequented and holiest pilgrim places of the whole of India."[8]

Commencing from the 18th century Orissan painting came under the sway of pronounced Rajasthani influence for about hundred the and fifty years or so from the later part of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the style of Orissan folk painting betray an evident bias for Deccanese and south Indian mannerism. Of very rare origin the earliest Jagannatha temple *Pat*, collected from Jaipur, Rajasthan, perhaps secured by a Puripilgrim now preserved in the Asutosh

Museum, can be plausibly placed in the 18th century. It is to be noted that unlike modern popular *Pats* of the same class, the background was not painted in customary red but in yellow; the custumes of the human figures are also draped in the Rajput fashion. The earliest *Pats* in the Asutosh Museum and my personal collections, representing the Jagannatha temple complex, symbolishing the entire universe, are masterpieces of miniature painting, about 100 years old. Projecting within circular framework, the stupendous *Sikhara* (tower) of the shrine, actually 200 ft. high, encircled by birds in flight singing in praise of the deity, is placed on steps and receeding bases of Mount *Nilachala*. The upward thrust of the monumental edifice is cleverly balanced by multiple horizontal parallel lines in traditional manner, crowded with numerous legendary Vaisnavite tales, ten *Avataras* (incarnations of Vishnu) and endless miniature shrines devoted to subordinate deities. Recently acquired from my collection, by the National Museum, New Delhi, a very large modern *Panchamandira Pat* by Raghu Maharana, treated in identical arrangement but in elaborate detail, depicts the central complex of the Jagannatha temple projected cleverly to the front by the introduction of the blue *Jagamohana* in between the yellow forms of the mighty spire and the *Natamandira* flanked on both sides by pairs of subsidiary *Bhadradueles* with trefoiled arches, enshrining on the left Siva and the Raja of Puri and on the right Brahma and Garuda in adoring poses (fig. 46).

An elaborately painted "*Chandoa*" (conopy) *Pat* (col. pl. 20) by Raghu Maharana of Puri, the doyen of Orissa *Chitrakaras* in 1941, display a similar arrangement of the Jagannatha temple within double circular rows, the inner one devoted to the *Rasalila* i.e. Krishna dancing alternately with Radha and the outer one to the ten *Avataras* of Vishnu and the *Ballyalila* (exploits of infant Krishna) within rings of separate medallions. The artist ingenously disengage the triple shrines by again introducing the blue *Jagamohana* hemmed in between the *Sikhara* and the *Bhogamandapa* against a floriated background. Formerly in the author's collection it is now preserved in the Museum of the Missouri University, U.S.A.

That the Orissan folk painters has an apparent bias for hot flamboyant colours viz. red, yellow, black and blue is undeniably proved by a resplendent *Jhulan Pat* (77 cm.×62 cm.) by Rama Maharana, talented brother of the other two Panu and Raghu. (col. pl. 21 and fig. 47). Topped by flying winged angels and pairs of addorsed parrots, against sparkling blue sky sprinkled with flower offering of the gods from above, the monumental effect of the three tapering shrines (terraced *Bhadra Deuls*), the central one framing another miniature temple containing Krisna and Gopis, playing on a flute under the Kadamba tree, flanked by two other accompanying shrines, each showing within cusped arches Jasoda, holding in her hands infant brothers Krishna and Balarama, is a bewildering artistic piece because of its complimentary colour combination and delicate embellishment. The original sources of the peculiar composition and associated motifs of the structural design is revealed if we compare the Deccanese textile wall hanging from Golconda, *c.* 1600[9] in a Japanese collection with a turetted pavilion visualising figures within cusped arches, besides the specially painted cotton cloth from Arcot of the 18th century,[10] showing identical arrangement of triple shrines on the same level, each containing divinites within separate niches adorned by hovering winged *Gandharvas* and parrots above (fig. 56). It may be noted that the employment in Puri *Patas* of vertical series of niches, containing figures on both sides, can be traced to similar usage in Adil Shahi Deccanese paintings of the 16th century. So it may be surmised that the peculiar layout of and composition of the Jagannatha *Pat* may be directly traced to the neighbouring Muslim Deccanese formulae of flanking large central spaces by strips or vertical columns containing niches embellished with human figures and floral motifs (fig. 48) which again was perhaps previously influenced by the Iranian convention. Understandably, it represents today an incliation towards realism, combined with a taste for intricate detail, but the preoccupation in respect of subject matter is unfailingly religious and mythological in contrast to the modern wave of seculiar representation of the current sophisticated culture of West Bengal, specially Midnapur.

A provoking design profusely ornamented, the *Rasa Pata* 52 cm.×46 cm.), painted by the brothers Raghu and Rama, in my possession is a supreme work of art scintillating with dazzling colours (col. pl. in Jacket and fig. 55). Concentric circles and half circles are charmingly worked out with intricate scrolls within a spreading rectangular frame of infinite grace. Petals of a full bloom lotus, the eternal emblem of Indian art and spirituality, are inset with the pairs of Krishna and Radha, confronting each other in a swaying rythm echoing the dominating central Krishna in glimmering blue, dancing to the tune of the musical instruments played by the flanking Gopis. Within the flaming scarlet medallion, glowing warm colours emphasise the forceful linear pattern contributing to the enamelled jewellery effect of this ethralling piece of Orissan folk art.

In Orissa there have always been cases of folk-artists supported by local magnates, as well as cases of exceedingly large and ingenuous folk paintings ordered by wealthy princes. In 1945 during my regular excursions to the Damodarpur-Raghurajpur-Dandasahi complex of villages entirely peopled by folk artists, bordering both sides of river Bhargavi in the Puri district, I fortunately came upon a magnificent Jagannatha Balaram Subhadra Pat—a rare composition surpassing the limits of pure folkore, which the twin brothers were engaged in preparing for the Maharaja of Nepal, for a fantastic sum. After great pursuasion I could succeed in acquiring this largest painting (220 cm. by 120 cm.) for the Asutosh Museum for a comparatively meagre amount as a token of their personal love and devotion for me. Placed according to tradition, this unique *Pat* delineating the Trinity in *Rajabesha* (royal attire), under three towering shrines, like the *Jhulan Pat*, just described, is a meticulous exercise of amazing dexerity and unequalled refinement not lacking monumental vitality (fig. 54).

In Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Indonesia, Combodia and other South Eastern countries of Asia influenced by India, palm-leaf was extensively used for writing purposes as well as painting. Happilly the practice is still continued in Orissa, the drawing is usually done with pointed iron styles on horizontal strips of palm-leaf after proper treatment. Black soot is rubbed on the incision to make it visible sometimes added with paint, filled with a brush to highten the effect. Besides evidences of old palm-leaf manuscript paintings revealing skillful handling and precise decoration, in museums and private collections, modern folk artists are equally proficient in producing etchings of transitory moments.

Of considerable aesthetic and cultural importance, the incised drawing from the unpublished manuscript of Gita-Govinda in the Asutosh Museum, (fig. 56) the pensive kneeling figure of Krisna awaiting in vain the expected arrival of Radha, in the place of tryst, is a notable example of typical palm-leaf style of the 19th century. First to be noted is the unusual three tired conical coiffure or hat of Krishna worn by the modern Phew dancers of Burma and so popular in late mediaeval paintings of Burma, Siam, Combodia etc. It is not a little surprising that both in style and treatment, the drawing, follows closely the much earlier common linear technique current in Western and South Indian paintings between the 14th and 16th centuries A.D. Plain wiry thin lines outlining the pointed angularism of the profile face simultaneously circumscribe the swelling volume of the chest and expanding limbs in easy flow of gliding lines. Also the drawing strangely recalls almost identical representation of Kalaka conversing with the Saka king in the *Kalpasutra Kalaka Katha* of the Western Indian School of about 1400 A.D. in the prince of Wales Museum Bombay.[11]

Revealing vital craftsmanship the pages of a palm-leaf manuscript of Krishnalila from Ganjam, almost recent, further envisaging the rich possibilities of borders and constumes enlivened with pleasing colour surfaces, is painted with the Dasavatara images as well as Rasalila scenes showing Krishna of over powering stature gaily encircled by dancing voluminous Gopis in gay abandon (col. pls. 15, 16, 17).

Probably from Orissa an illustrated palm—leaf from National Museum collection (?) show four panels very carefully deliniated. Skillfull handling precise decoration and similarly of architectural framework and the garment specially the protruding chin of Lakhsmi with typical projecting *Nath* (nosering) is reminiscent of Bhagavata palm leaf drawing in British Museum, London of *c.* 18th century.[12] The first panel shows Vishnu holding *Chakra* and *Gada* explaining something with his hands to Lakshmi, seated easily on his lap, the second panel showing Suryya driving a chariot with seven horses, the third panel Kaliyadamana, the fourth Vishnu with *Sankha Chakra*, *Gada*, *Padma* mounted on Garuda.[13] Another Western Indian Jaina scroll topped by a multiple turreted temple, also from the same Museum, enshrining a Tirthankara seated just like a *Puri*, *Mandir Pat*, ground covered by series of vertical and horizontal panels containing deities and religious scenes arranged parallely is remarkable.

It must be admitted that *Pata* painting has been declining at an alarming rate in Orissa and specially West Bengal. Recent productions are mostly lifeless and stereotyped. Introduction of chemical colours has further hastened the process. There are still some master artists in both the States who inspite of the effect of modernization are trying to infuse new life based on traditional concepts of design & colour.

Illustrative of the novel changes in the changed environment two separate contemporary *Vastraharana Patas*—one by Arjuna Maharana of Dandshahi, Puri district, Orissa and the other by Germani *Patua* of village Sardha, Dt. Birbhum, West Bengal, both of them have been painted and acquired for my private collection as late as 1978 (size 46 cm. × 74 cm. and 39 cm. × 57 cm. respectively). The Orissan example on cloth, is a vital statement emphasising the novelty of design and spacing through skillful draftsmanship and pulsating rhyhm. The dazzling yellow of the nude ornamented bodies of the enticing Gopies contrast with the pale blue of the Yamuna river below and the mischevious young Krishna hiding amidst the sprawling branches of the Kadamba tree, hung with the stolen clothes of the bathing beauties. Unlike the conventional treatment of arranging rather stiffly poised Gopis standing on a horizontal plane, half submerged in the waters parallel to the stooping branches of the tree above, the design is free and totally altered. Perhaps influenced by the temple reminiscent Nayikas with alluring curves, the judiciously placed Gopis scattered in gay abondon, reveal boldly modelled limbs, extremely narrow middle supporting voluptuous bosoms and fascinating coquettish faces, trying in vain to hide their exposed charms. A sense of agitated movement is further enhanced by one of the daring Gopis trying to scramble up the tree to recover the stolen garments from Krishna, the deceiver, looking down on the distressed damsels with impish smile is paralled by a beautifully curved 12th century ivory comb from Ganjam in the National Museum, New Delhi. In the *Vastraharana* painting by Subharaj Maharaj, (1750 1820), the noted artist of Karnataka of Gandhra origin, we for the first time see the marked deviation from mythology in which the Gopis are shown climbing up the tree in a frantia bed to receive there clothes. Indeed this modern version by Arjuna Maharana, the son of a gifted father, has undoubtedly added a new realistic dimension to the older rigid concept (col. pl. 22).

Less sophisticated, Germani *Patua*, handles the *Vastraharana* scene with a greater empasis on formal folk stylization. Painted on paper, the images compactly cover the entire background in a dense design unlike the free open atmosphere of its Orissan counterpart. Retaining the colour-scheme appropriate to each area, the sober unadorned Gopis, comparatively limited in number, are drawn with summarily treated features and frightened looks demurely supplicating the god to return their dresses. The whole scene is expressive of calm composure and restrained balance without the yearning sensuousness and restless postures of the Puri damsels. Lines firm and less gliding, lightly define the flat smooth surface of the enlarged statures of Gopies in contrast to the congested foliage of the tree above (col. pl. 23).

Yet another contemporary *Pata* in black and white by Arjuna Maharana in my personal collection, while effectively depicting the Kanchi-Kaveri legend, viz. Krishna Balarama riding two sturdy horses of Andhra inspiration, confronted by the milkmaid, is rather floridly baroque (fig. 57).

REFERENCES

1. Krasa, M.—Orissan Folk Painting, Naprstkove Museum, Prague, 1967, p. 19.
2. The vertically flanking centipede is a perplexing object unknown anywhere. Is it a mount or merely a totem ?
3. Vide 4th Chapter of *Sukranitisara* and the chapter on *Pratima Lakshmana* of the *Brihat Sanhita*. The *Patuas* of Orissa still however try to follow the ancient tradition.
4. The *Tala* has been defined as follows: A quarter of the width of the artists own first is called *angula* or twelve such fingers width is the measure of a *Tala*. Tagore, Abanindranath, Indian Artistic Anatomy, Golden Jubilee Volume of the Indian society of Oriental Art, Calcutta, 1961 p. 4. and J.N. Banerji-Development of Hindu Iconography, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 355-56.
5. Dutt, G.S.—Indegenous Painters of Bengal, J. I. S. O. A. Vol I, 1933, pl. VIII.
6. Bandopadhyya, A.K., Bankurar Mandir (in Bengali), Calcutta ch.7, Plate facing p. 8.
7. Monde, H.,—*Folk Tales of India & Ceylon*.
8. Krasa—*ibid.*, pp. 19-20.
9. Marg, Vol. 5, pls. 1 and 4-5.
10. Agarwala, V.S., Heritage of Indian Art, New Delhi, 1964, p. 164.
11. Barett and Grey—*ibid.*, p. 37.
12. Museum, No. 4, Unesco, 1975, Conservation in south and South East Asia by Agarwala pl. 70 fig. 8.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 177, fig. 15.

CHAPTER IX

BENGAL PATS—LATE MEDIAEVAL AND MODERN

"A feeling for colour, the urge to depict, or just an impulse to decorate, the folk painter in India had the same reasons for his artistic activity as folk painters anywhere else. His imagery came from natural, his inspiration from the tradition of the common people, their customs, beliefs and even prejudices. At the same time he did not work for pure aesthetic satisfaction in design without thought for the content." He afterwards took recourse to symbolism to tell a story and signify a cult image.

Bengal Folk Art however is not something which is recent past, is a continuous and living process from remote past as revealed by old specimens. Contemporary scroll painting or *Pats* of rural Bengal show that traditional art, in its popular version, is still alive in remote regions unaffected by westernised urban culture. It is a matter of no little regret that like all other vestiges of traditional culture it is also fast decaying before the onrush of modern mechanised civilisation.

Painted usually on paper, often of the cheapest variety, sometimes on old newspapers too, none of the surviving *Pata Chitras* or *Jarano Pat* (scroll paintings) of West Bengal are older than three hundred years or so. Also called *Yamapats*, because the last panels usually end with scene of last Judgement dominated by a fierce looking god of death flanked by terrible ghosts dispensing justice to the evil doers. Most of the records of folk and tribal origin were painted during the last two hundred years and not hundred years only as formerly believed. Their average length varies from twelve to sixteen feet although rare *Pats* twenty cubits long are also met with sometimes. Usually they are one or two feet broad. The subject matter is invariably religious and devoted to epic cycles e.g. Krisnalila Rama lila, Behula and

Kamale-Kamini legend and the Chaitanya lila. These *Pata Cihtras* were mainly confined to West Bengal; Gazi *Pats* or *Pats* pertaining to the Ghazi legend were also in vogue among the Muslims in Comilla and Barisal now in Bangladesh. The long rolls containing 10 or 12 separate pictures are arranged in successive rectangular panels, one below the other, recalling the ancient *Charana Chitra* pattern, each picture being exhibited by the *Patua* at a time as the roll is gradually unfolded and as the story of each picture being chanted to the accompaniment of the traditional ballad composed by the *Patuas* themselves.[1] Thus the *Patua* combined in himself the artist, composer and singer. We have cited above evidence throughout the last two thousand and five hundred years, that the *Pats* and *Patuas* were important audio-visual mediums in ancient India in educating the masses almost corresponding to the Gallery Lecturers of modern museums. The story telling capacity of Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati and Ajanta are still retained on these traditional mediums to this day.

The rectangular panels are either demarcated by plain bands in lighter colours or by floral borders in which rosettes and leaves alternate. Flanking continuous decorative borders at the same time emphasise the inter-relation of specific panels.

Unlike the *Kanthas*[2] the *Pats* of Bengal are more or less representational but rarely symbolic. It is obvious that scrolls were painted in the narrative style. The storytelling capacity of ancient Indian art is also retained here. We find in the gradual unfolding of the story a continuation of the peculiar traditional technique of ancient India. But in *Pats* the head is shown in profile, the eye in full view, the trunk also in front view, the legs and feet again in strict or three quarter profile, and the "conformation and movement of the figures and their parts are limited to a few typical hapes."

The *Pats* are distinquished by vigorous lines and vivid colours such as we have seen in the illustrated Ramayana manuscript of Tulsidasa. The *Patua* generally use primary colours, red, blue and yellow.

green and brown were sometimes employed, the former particularly in paintings in the Dumka sub-division (Santhal Parganas) and the latter in Manbhum district, both areas in Bihar, but culturally part and parcel of Bengal.

Indian red, indigo, burnt sienna and yellow ochre predominate. The colours are laid on in flat washes. The classical Indian modelling quality of the line is nowhere apparent except in the Kalighat drawings.

In the earlier scrolls extraneous influence can be detected. An indigenous idiom and freedom of action distinguish only those executed in recent times. Not only in dress, treatment of trees and floral borders but also in their architectural setting too, some of the early nineteenth century *Pats* betray Rajasthani influence.[3] The Mughal idiom, on the other hand, is distinctly perceptible in at least one old Ramayana *Pat* from Murshidabad the Gurusaday Museum, Calcutta, dating back perhaps to the end of the 18th century. In the first example almost the entire design and colour scheme are reminiscent of Mughal coneptions. The panel representing the marriage procession scene of Rama is typically Mughal in its spacing, movement and compact grouping.

The western Bengal *Pats*, in the different districts, show peculiarities in design and colour. It has already been pointed out that the Santhal Parganas prefer figures silhoutted in green, blue and yellow against a white background. Manbhum products are easily recognised by their preference for one particular shade burnt sienna, relieved by white and yellow patches and a densely packed composition. In Midnapur and Howrah scrolls; the overcrowded panels have elaborate decorations and a minute finish is given to the scenes, the seated figures crowning these scrolls are impressive and monumental. It is to be noted that Birbhum, Bankura, Burdwan and Howrah invariably favour an Indian red background and Hooghly a dark brown. The abstract linear treatment moreover of the Hooghly and Manbhum *Pats* is peculiar. Although neighbours, subtle differences also exist between the Bankura and Birbhum varieties. Linear reduction into straight striped drapery often floriated (fig. 90)[4] is a characteristic peculiar to Bankura and present from the earliest times. Moreover the head is seldom represented other than in a sharp and angular profile. Birbhum, on the other hand favours a three quarter view (fig. 91). Another unique feature invariably employed by the Birbhum *Patua* is the coventional double eyebrow, and pleated folds of the drapery. These and several other traits and stylistic elements help in identfying the products of the different districts.

Mr. Ajit Ghose was one of the earliest donors to present a panel of an old Ramayana *Pat* to the Asutosh Museum in 1939. Contrary to current notion he first recognised the importance of old Bengal paintings (*Pats*) long before Mr. Gurusaday Dutta who was supposed to have been the pioneer in popularising Bengal folk art.

About the particular old Ramayana *Pat* he observes "In their archaic simplicity, their bold figure drawing and in the impression of largeness they convey, these Ramayana pictures impel the thought that they are a direct transference to paper of mural paintings, which must have been surpassingly magnificent. The largeness of style is due to the unerring instinct of the artist which made him draw prominently only the figures essential to the main idea omitting in every detail it was possible to omit and thus forcefully bringing out the action of his story. There is no studied attempt at grouping as in the painted manuscript covers, but there is instead an amazing boldness and most expressive vigour and spontaneity which make a strong appeal to our emotions. They are drawings of simple outlines filled in with flat colour washes in which their is very little shading, but the artist has succeeded in giving life to his figures, movement to the body, expression to the face—even though his drawings seem to be strange. We should not cavil at much that appears to our sophisticated eyes to be quaint in these pictures consider them as merely amusing. They are piquant efforts which reveal the artist' mind even though their manner may be elemental. Indeed there is no learned technique in these paintings. There is little differentiation of light and shade. There is no suggestion of atmosphere. There is no attempt at perspective. Yet by the force of mere draughtsmanship, the artist has contrived to suggest roundness in his figures and to show the contours of the body. Again the figures are as faithfull as portaits, for the features of each actor have been wonderfully preserved in each scene. The scene in which Rama is seen challenging Shiva impresses by its monumental grandeur combined with an archaic simplicity. The tall and massive proportions of the figures are striking. There is a magnificent sense of stupendous power with a touch of pity for his human adversary in the divine figure of Shiva who occupies the whole height of the picture and Rama is less imposing only in comparison with the supreme god. Finally we have the dramatic interposition of Parvati between her mighty spouse and the hero relieve the tense situation."[5]

In the subsequent *Pats* of the 18th and 19th century, the earlier naivette is lacking and more emphasis is laid on grouping, perspective and decorative details, specially in the *Pats* of Howrah and Midnapur.

An examination of some details of the different varieties of *Pats* will now be undertaken. Let us first take up the two panels of a Ramayana *Pat* (col. pl. 9)[6] from Onda, Bankura (Asutosh Museum Collection) executed more than hundred years ago. The upper scene represented Rama, attended by Vibhisana, Sugriva, Laksmana and Hanumana worshipping Durga on the eve of his victory over Ravana. Set against a flat empty space, the heavy figure of the goddess dominates the scene by her sudden appearance and animated gesture, contrasting with rigidly vertical poses of the attentive figures on both sides. The movement and arrangement of her ten hands is followed by the semicircular sweep described by the heads of worshipping Rama and his retinue. Contrary movements of the two distinct groups divided by the *Mangala Kalasa*, balance the simple but effective composition. One of the critical moments of Rama's life has found here a dramatic illustration in colourful contrast.

The lower panel represents a scene of the epic fight between the monkey friends of Rama and the Rakhsasas. It is full of dynamic action seldom excelled by the *Patas* anywhere. Two advancing gigantic monkeys, one white, and another dark blue form the two sides of a triangle forming an intricate pattern woven on Indian red ground. In the bustle and din of battle, it is difficult to single out the contending parties of soldiers, they are all mixed up in a confused hurly-burly, some charging, others flying, here and there, single combats are going on at a distance from the main battle. The figures are in every conceivable attitude, running, standing, kneeling, crouching or turning sharply round in the middle of the fight to face the enemey once more. What spaces are left are very cleverly filled by decapitated heads and detached limbs.

In the *Sakti Pat* from Birbhum, (private collection)[7]; a round *Chalachitra* picturesquely controls the upright movement of the goddess Durga striding upon a "superhuman" lion and a fallen demon, flanked by Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesa, Kartikeya and pillars in the background. The forceful simplicity is unlike the baroque treatment of the Durga Mahisimardini *Pat* from Puri overburdened by floral decoration (fig. 41).

Unlike her counterpart from Bankura, the figure of Durga is tall and rests monumentally on a pyramidal pedestal. Billowing draperies of the background harmonise with the parallel movement of the numerous hands and vertical pillars act as a foil to the multiple curves of the design. The colour scheme is also noteworthy. The blue garment of the goddess, between heavy bounding lines, freely applied, lends particular emphasis to the figure of the goddess, dwarfing all other figures in the group. Shades of blue, indigo, Indian red, yellow, yellow ochre, green and white are all skillfully applied to make this picture vibrate with energy. As against the vertical upsurge of lines of the above *Pat* a scintilating *Pat* from Narajole. Midnapur (R.P. Mookherjee collection, Calcutta) displaying in red and pink an admirable Durga in floriated robes with intricately designed jewellery and heavy *Mukuta*, relies more on plastic disposition of mass and volume expressive of the benign aspect of the goddess (*Karunamoyee*) that the people of Bengal love to worship (col. pl. 12).

A Behula *Pat* from Daspur, Midnapur, in the Asutosh Museum collection shows with a mastery of spacing and craftmanship on a white ground, patterns in light blue, bounded by curves (fig. 94).[8]

Formerly in my personal collection lately acquired by the National Museum, New Delhi, a Krisna lila *Pat* from Mahisadal, Midnapur of enduring value (col. pl. 10) is remarkable for its composition. It shows the river Yamuna marked by dancing waves meandering through the centre of the panels cutting right across the miracle scenes performed by Krishna in Vrindaban viz. the *Astamalla* or the eight heroic fights between young Krisna and the succession of eight demons sent by the evil King Kansa to destroy him viz. *Kaliyadamana*, *Putanabadha*, *Vakasurabadha*, *Kesinidhana*, *Sakatasurabadha* etc. Crossing herds of cattle and projecting wings of the *Vakasura* skillfully interconnect the panels. The peculiar way of showing the river is reminiscent of the Sunga technique in stone, on the Sanchi gateway, (1st century B.C.) representing the Niranjana river and the Mahakapi Jataka.

A more sophisticated painting is represented by the *Kirtan* scene from Burdwan district in the Asutosh Museum collection (fig. 95). The ecstatic figure of Chaitanya occupies the centre of both the front and back rows. Yellow ochre flesh colour shimmers on an Indian red surface. Brown musical instruments (*Dohl*) add depth to the colour scheme. Solid round bodies, delineated by gliding curves and interesected by swaying limbs create a rhythmic pattern of intense emotional fervour.

Between 1937 and 1947 I had the rare the opportunity of collecting the largest number of *Pats* from undivided Bengal and Orissa for the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, the pioneer museum in India to open a separate wing specially devoted to comprehensive aspects of folk arts and crafts, just after it was opened. A close scrutiny revealed at that time that *Pats* from different districts particularly of West Bengal were notable for different characteristics in design and colour, style and technique, although the themes were invariably common. In fact they strangely corresponded to the prevailing local idioms in spoken language varying from district to district and region to region. Distinguished by vigorous lines and vivid colours, the unsophoisticated artists of Bengal villages as observed before, generally used primary colours, red, blue, yellow black and white green and brown were sometimes employed, the former particularly in scroll paintings of Dum ka sub-division of Santhal Parganas now in Bihar but culturally belonging to West Bengal and the latter in Purulia district. Indian red, indigo, burnt sienna and yellow ochre predominated. The colours are laid in flat washes, except in Kalighat drawings and Birbhum *Pats* where some amount of shading were employed.

Now let us repeat in detail the district-wise variations as pointed out above. The Santhal Parganas prefer figures in green-blue, yellow, black and brown against a white background. Full of densely packed composition, Purulia products are easily recognised by their preference for one particular shade-burnt siena relieved by yellow patches outlined in black also against a white background. Except for these border areas the rest of the districts sport a coloured background preferably red. In Howrah and Midnapur *Patachitras* the overcrowded panels have elaborate decorations and a minute finish is given to the figures in the scenes. Crowning the scrolls of *Kamale-Kamini* the seated figures of Raja Salban surrounded by courtiers are adorned in draperies in flowing parallel lines (figs. 88, 89) are impressive and monumental recalling Chinese calligraphic lines more like the parallel wavy folds of *Saris* worn by the Kalighat courtesans of the 19th century.[9] It is to be noted that Birbhum, Bankura and Burdwan invariably favour an Indian red beckground and Hooghly a dark brown. The abstract linear treatment moreover, of the Hooghly *Pats* are peculiar. Although close neighbours subtle difference also exist between the Bankura & Birbhum varieties. Striped linear folds of drapery, often floriated, is again a characteristic peculiar of Bankura, present from the earliest times and echoed by the terracotta plaques of the brick temples of the district. Moreover, the head is seldom represented other than in sharp angular profile. Bankura *Pats* are replete with slim slender compressed figures surrounded by spacious airiness. A standing Gopi with its back to the viewer is introduced to indicate a sense of third dimension in the otherwise flat surface, reminiscent of such peculiar technique adopted in the railing pillars of Bharhut and Sanchi in the pre-christian era (fig. 90). Birbhum on the other hand prefers overlapping and compact grouping modelled in soft swelling curves. Besides plasticity of form

Birbhum also favours a three quarter view (fig. 91). Another characteristic feature invariably employed by the Birbhum *Patua* is the conventional double eyebrow and voluminous pleated folds of drapery. These and several other traits and stylistic elements help in identifying the products of each district.

As observed before, an artistic legacy of profound importance is provided by a Ramayana *Pat* of the Gurusaday Museum, Calcutta, Betraying obvious Mughal influence in technique and treatment but couched in traditional language undeniably belonging to the 17th-18th century Murshidabad School, the *Pat* is perhaps the oldest of such kind so far known. Some of the panels (fig. 96), charmingly depict the encounter between Rama & Parasuraa on the way to Mithila, marriage of Rama & Lakshmana with Sita & Urmila, against a background of plaintain trees, watched by King Janaka seated inside a pavilion accompanied by group of curious ladies wearing Rajasthani skirts decorated with parallel pleats or flowers; return of the four brothers to Ayodhya borne on canopied *Chaturdolas* recalling similar canopied pavilions conspicuously placed side by side in a grand panorama of the marriage scene in a large painting belonging to the Murshidabad school (col. pl. 13) but later by a century or so. The procession of contrasting prancing chargers & trotting elephants in serried ranks, is however arranged according to strict visual perspective (fig. 98). Although royal riders having conventional youthful faces, delicately attired in variegeted dresses add a note of considerable animation and gaiety, the horses and elephants on the other hand are lacking the vigour & vitality of their Mughal counterparts. The panel (fig. 99) showing the dense campact mass of grimacing *Rakhasas* atacking Rama & Lakshmana from the sky above, reveals the emphatic delineation of the folk mannerism, while the dynamic movement of the group of musicians emerging diagonally from the lefthand corner below is strangely reminiscent of the musician group of the famous Mughal paintings birth celebrations as well as of Shahajan's marriage in colour and composition.[10] Besides its antiquity this remarkable *Pat* is distinguished by suave colour scheme and draughtsmanship of no mean order.

Two Ramayana panels from the South Kensington for Museum, London (fig. 60) collected from West Murshidabad district by J.C. French in 1928 are remarkable pictorcal documents of extraordinary vigour. Romantically represented, they apparently belong to a Ramayana *Pat* of about 1800 A.D. as a sequence to the Ramayana *Pat* of the same Museum, illustrated by W.G. Archer in Kalighat Painting, (fig. 88) as identified by me. Profoundly blending Mughal realism and traditional idealism it is indeed a landmark of the transitional period. Besides the obvious similarity in contour and dresses of Tara (of Acche's panel) and Sita of the present panel the floral adornements are exactly similar. In the upper panel pregnant Sita wrongly accused of public gossip banished by the order of Rama is carried in a palanuin (instead of the chariot escorted by Lakshmana) by bearers with trimmed Mughal moustaches. In the lower panel, she is abondoned helplessly in a dense forest, dramatically guarded by ferocious tigers and hissing cobras, vividly deliniated according to the Bengali Ramayana by poet Kirttivasa of the 15th century, vide also Catalogue of an Exhibition of Arts of Bengal, London 1979, Page, 42 (Heritage of Bangladesh and Eastern India) where the description is rather vague.

Another important document collected by J.C. French for the South Kensington Museum, London also, is a wooden book cover from Bankura dated 1647 A.D. envisage the aminated *Kirtan* scene of Chaitanyadeva (fig. 61) accompanied by his disciples, including the turbaned *Yavana* Haridasa, palpably betraying Mughal influence. It is a sophisticated painting vividly contrasting with a similar *Pata* from Midnapur (fig. 63), two centuries earlier, in undenible archaic character of the Mediaelval Eastern Indian variety.

A remarkable *Pat* representing the composite pictorial art traditions of Western and Eastern India has been lately secured by the Crafts Museum, New Delhi. Presumably of 17th century origin, one of the rarest and oldest of its kind, paralleled by only one or two similar specimens in the collections of the Asutosh Museum and Gurusaday Museum, Calcutta and the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London, the Krishnalila *Pat* from Bankura (fig. 100) envisaging one of the familiar exploits of young Krishna viz., *Kaliyadamana* is significantly divided into three vertical divisions, a peculiar characteristic almost unknown to Bengal but reminiscent of the Adil Shahi mannerism of 17th century Deccani paintings and Western Indian renderrings. In the central panel by far the largest, tiny Krishna is shown gleefully dancing over the confronting heads of a couple of gigantic snakes, one in pink and the other in white, entwined in fascinating interlaced pattern, their coiled tails tried to be swallowed by a kneeling Garuda at the bottom. An almost identical design surprisinly occours on the walls of the contemporary 17th century temple of Rameswaram temple in the extreme south of India. These two peculiar iconographic features viz., the pair of coiled juxtaposed snakes—perhaps representing the Nagaraja and his queen and the Garuda making a supreme effort to swallow both of them are unique. Everywhere in India, in the subsequent periods, the *Kaliyadamana* scene conspicuously visualise one single forbidding snake in blue black without the Garuda, on the expanded hood on which Krishna dances ecstatically after its subjugation.

Flanked by a pair of *Nagakanyas* on both sides of Krishna, the waters of the blue Yamuna river are completely covered with floating lotus flowers and creepers. Two side wings are divided vertically into compartmental niches showing individually, Radha (?) and a Brahmin dancing in ecstacy, Krisna in striped shorts playing on flutes etc., leading cows and calves or carrying pots of curds on his shoulders. Besides realistic animals representing the transitional phase between classical & folk mannerism, this particularly valuable *Pat* predominently miniaturist in character reflect the flat, angular & linear techniques of contemporary mediaeval temple terracottas of Bengal. Colours are mellow and scintillating as opposed to the vibrant colours of later *Pats*. Betraying the influence of Murshidabad School of painting of the Bengal Nawabs, another significant trend of this transitional painting is revealed in the typical *Hasiya* Mughal floral plant borders on the sides, as well as on the tasseled shash tied round the waist of Garuda also in the characteristic Mughal fashion decorated with typical Mughal motifs.[11] Lively representation of the animals also denote the transitional phase between classical and folk conventions. This invaluable *Pat* besides combining the flat angular and linear treatment of contemporary temple terracottas of Bengal, strongly Bankuran in flavour, specially reveal the concave bent form of the feet, associated with mediaevel Eastern Indian style. That this example may not be later than the 17th century is also corroborated by the unusual diaper pattern of the coiled snakes almost echoing the similar geometric device occuring on the walls of the 17th century temple of Rameswaram in the extreme south of India.

Parts of a large Ramayana *Pat* collected from (fig. 101). Birbhum district is of exceptional interest in colour and composition. Panel (a) shows the episode of killing Tarakasura by Ramachandra with Lakshmana behind and sage Visvamitra partly visible in his hermitage, in the lefthand corner below, always endangered by forays of demons and demonesses. Occupying about three quarters of space, the awesome figure of the dying ogress dumped in a sewlling mass of indigo, red and yellow is terrifying indeed, complimented as it is by the valiant attitude of the strikingly green bodied Rama, supported by Lakshmana in yellow. Represented in bold vivid colours and swaying rhythm of lines the pictorial narrative is extremely dramatic. One of the best examples of the traditional *Patua* style of about the early 18th century A.D. it betrays the principal ingredients of plastic modelling and facile composition, of the lost mural art of Bengal. It is followed by another (fig. 102) Panel (b) containing two incidents of Rama's early life. Accompanied by sage Visvamitra the two brothers after releasing Ahalya from her curse are represented proceeding to Mithila to break the *Haradhanu* and marry Sita and subsequently being ferried accross by a fisherman (*Kaivartya*) in his boat accross the Ganga. Colour scheme is the same as the previous one, indian red, indigo, green, black, pink and yellow predominating. Movement is more restrained here, although colours are vibrant. Panel (c) pertains to the palace at Ayodhyapuri, the towering figures of king Dasaratha, attired in regal dress, followed by his three queens, welcomes the bridal pair Rama & Sita, blessed by Visvamitra. All the figures are unusually monumental and vivid. Background is however plain instead of the beflowered designs of Orissan *Chauka Pats*.

Joy and excitement characterising the above panels are succeeded by the next one Panel (d), full of poignant sorrow. Consequent upon Rama's exile to the forest the recumbent fainting figure of Dasaratha overpowered with grief at the imminent seperation, occupies the central place, flanked on his right side by the wailing queens and other royal attendants and on the left by the departing group of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, after final blessing by Kausalya.

Scene of Balibadh is next described vividly in Panel (e). The strident figure of king Bali with defeated Sugriva at his feet, is treacherously attacked by Rama with bow and arrows screened by a tree at the centre and covered by Lakshmana behind.

Although fragmentary, this Ramayana *Pat* from Birbhum is one of the remarkable examples of folk idiom of Western Bengal. Expressed in dazzling contrasting colours the few dominating figures in dramatic action delineated in simple and attractive way, must have greatly appealed to the rural assemblage. When complete this unique specimen may have been at least 20 cubits long.

Conspicuous for the display of munumental images covering the entire background, dramatic action is more pronounced in a large sized Ramayana *Pat* also from Birbhum but more modern (National Museum, New Delhi). Human beings, animals, trees and pavillions are represented in enlarged dimensions. Three panels reproduced here show (1) Rama & Lakshmana, surrounded by subservient advisers Hanumana, Jambhubana and other monkeys, seated on the seashore planning the rescue of Sita, (2) Hanumana first disguised as an old Brahmin, later revealing his own identity as a messenger from Rama to Sita held captive in Asokavana, Lanka by Ravana, the successive scenes demarcated by tall palm trees, very decoratively treated and (3) the final battle between Ravana and the two brothers. All the panels are characterised by animated movement conveyed through vigorous lines and dynamic postures. Colour plays no less important part in delineation on the different characters; large areas are skillfully demarcated in sparkling green and red relieved by patches of gleaming white denoting monkeys, and heightened by shading whenever necessary. The manner of wearing the beflowered *Sari* worn by Sita is quite becoming the wife of Bengali Zamindar of the 19th century, to which the architectural style also belongs. Unparalled anywhere, folk imagination is most intimately expressed by the quaint way in which the gigantic serpent suddenly rises from the depth of the ocean to grab the unwary monkey and the impish manner in which the monkey fighters scramble accross the bridge unwillingly improvised by the ten horizontal heads of helpless Ravana, producing a scene of extreme exhileration. At the same time the toothless Brahmana adds a touch of reality.

Further modernisation of the technique and treatment of the *Pat* is provided by an early 20th century representation of theatrical stagesetting with Rama & Lakshmana prominently occupying the centre flanked by galleries full of female onlookers & armed men, with Hanumana perched precariously of the top corner roof on the left unlike the modern Orissa *Pats* with flat surfaces, scarcely influenced by the West. This traditional Midnapur example modified by optical illusionism of depth is a typical representative of modern orientation.

It was rather a strange coincidence that after more than thirty years had elapsed since I had studied the technique of *Pats* in 1945, and ten years after my retirement from the University in 1968, the All India Handicrafts Board, Government of India entrusted me with the project of Documentation of the Folk and Tribal Paintings of the districts of Midnapur, Bankura and Birbhum in West Bengal and Santhal Parganas in Bihar. During a period of two years of sample surveys, in the above and allied areas, significant variations in dialect both linquistic and artistic were betrayed in an unquestionable manner. Differentiation in local artistic idioms were surprisingly brought to light even within the borders of the same district. This was contrary to my previous observations about unilocal formula. Taking Midnapur for example, a diversity of styles in different zones of the big district became apparent as I came to recognise that the *Patuas* and their styles could be divided into distinct '*Gharanas*' (schools) as in music. *Pats* from Sutahata, Nandigram, Ahmadabad and Mahishadal Thanas in the Tamluk sub-division could be grouped into one complex to the where the elaborate decorative element preponderated, perhaps due proximity to Orissa. Bearing the hallmark of the artists' talent in painstaking workmanship, impeccable attention to resplendent details of great beauty, they are undoubtedly reminiscent of the influence of Orissan *Pats* known for their exuberent workmanship. Pingla-Narajole in the central area also displaying its tendency towards elaborate designs is however conspicious for its sense of spaciousness avoiding overcrowded treatment. Daspur in Ghatal sub-division to the north west and neighbouring Chandrakona were surprisingly different with the accent on flat background devoid of any architectural setting sparsely filled with very simple figures with rounded features conveyed in limited number of colours, specially light blue and green, perhaps due to its close proximity to tribal areas like Binpur-Sanhrpur in the north.

As the demand for *Pats* delineating religious subjects have declined considerably in West Bengal for social reasons there is a tendency among modern *Chitrakaras* to take to purely secular themes illustrated in two *Pats* secured from contemporary Midnapur (a) representing a vivid delineation in traditional colours of the impact of modern civilization in the countryside, viz. introduction of motorcar and buses, cinemas with elaborate theatrical stages crowded by visitors arranged in rows one on top of another according to the agelong Indian tradition underlined by old women supported on sticks eagerly lining up to enter the auditorium, girls schools and refusal of educated girls to perform rural chores (fig. 108) and (b) another *Pat* using characteristic modern colours, figures and objects mainly linear shows a dramatic surely secular incident of the attempted abduction of a newly wed bride by the motor car driver who is however ultimately killed by the ingenuity of the girl herself (fig. 109).

Socio-economic factors had been playing havoc with the poverty stricken *Patua* community everywhere in the country. Professing a queer mixture of Hindu and Muslim faiths, quite unknown in Orissa, sometimes the *Patua* has two names one Hindu and another typically Muslim. As a result of rapid industrialisation and mechanised progress, almost everywhere the *Patuas* are forced to abandon the habits and practices of their forefathers, with the dwindling demand of *Patachitras* in the rural areas corresponding with declining standards of their works. Not only that, under the pressure of circumstances they are forced to undertake subsidiary occupations like snake charmers, factory labourers, builders of huts and roofs (*Gharami*) besides agricultural labourers. To save the *Patua* community of West Bengal from total extinction and to reclaim the age-old pictorial tradition of enduring beauty and significance both the state and Central Governments should not hesitate to initiate a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme without any further delay. In Orissa a similar deplorable condition obtaining about forty years ago had been hopefully retrieved through the foresight of the Government of Orissa who has successfully stemmed the rot through a network of Co-operative Socities and Emporiums in Bhuvaneswar, Cuttack, Puri and elsewhere and by introducing a scheme of regular encouragement of arts and crafts through promoting sales, import to foreign countries as well as financial grants to the needy artists and craftsmen. It may be added here that the Orissa *Chitrakaras* had somehow eked their existence, before the patronage extended to them by the authorities, by selling at a cheap rate *Pats* to thousands of devout pilgrims visiting the great temple of Jagannatha from all corners of India specially during the festivals. But unfortunately there is no such big temple pilgrimage centre in West Bengal to sustain the famished artist and artisans.

Of more than two hundred *Pats* of Bengal and Orissa, a few only acquired for the Asutosh Museum were purchased from dealers for paltry sums, most of the remarkable *Pats* of Bengal were collected by the artist Sudhangsu Kumar Roy (who for a number of years served as a Research Scholar in the Museum), and the celebrated artist Jamini Roy not to mention of some devoted members of the lower subortinate staff of the Museum. Except some noteworthy specimens purchased from Birendra Nath Roy of Puri at a very early stage, all the Orissan *Pats* were collected by me during my regular exploratory tours of Orissa, covering twenty years or so from 1939-1960.

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CHAPTER X

KALIGHAT SCHOOL OF PAINTING—IS IT DEAD ?

No comprehensive study of the folk paintings of Eastern India, is possible without a close scrutiny of the famous Kalighat School of Painting which flourished mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries. These fascinating Kalighat *Pats* were to a large extent associated with the celebrated ancient temple of goddess Kali just like the way the Puri *Pats* were intimately associated with the temple of Jagannatha of Puri catering to the crowds of devoted pilgrims. Contrary to the opinion of some noted foreign scholars who observed that the school became extinct after 1930, happilly it still survives to the present day although decadently, in the narrow alleys of Kalighat.[1] W.D. Archer who first made an exhaustive study of the Kalighat paintings divided the series of water colour paintings presented by Rudyard Kipling to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1917 which had been collected by his father J. Lockwood Kipling, while Principal of the Lahore School of Art; into several categories viz. Period I : 1800-1850, Period II : 1850-1870, Period III : 1870-1885, Period IV : 1885-1930. "The pictures" he observes, were painted by *Patuas* of village artists at Kalighat, Calcutta and had been produced by for mass sale to the pilgrims who thronged the Kalighat temple. They supplied a different kind of public from the local aristocracy and for this reason appeared to be a pupular form of Indian expression. But it was not only in their condition of production that the pictures were novel, their style also marked a novel departure from prevailing conceptions. With their bounding lines and bold rhythms they were obviously close to the ancient murals of Ajanta and Bagh, while the same qualities of line and rhythm, linked with powerful colour, displayed a surprising affinity with modern art. The work of Fernand Lagar[2] was a particularly striking analogy, for there were the same bold simplifications, the same robust tubulur forms, the Kipling pictures, in fact, were not only a new kind of Indian art but one which had seemingly antidated some of the more audacious inventions of modern art."

"At about the same time, critics in India, also became aware of Kalighat painting prominent among them was Ajit Ghose, who in an article contributed to the Indian art journal "Rupam", in October, 1926 made the first serious appraisal of the style. "There is an exquisite freshness and spontaneity of conception and execution in those old brush drawing (he wrote). They are not drawn with the meticulous perspective which gives such distinction to Moghul portraiture. They have not the studied elegance and striving after effect of the charmingly sensitive later drawings of the Kangra school, with which they are contemporary. But there is a boldness and vigour in the brush line which may be compared to Chinese calligraphy". The affinities of Kalighat pictures with those of certain modern artists were not lost upon Ghose and he claimed that some of their productions anticipated by a century or more cubism and impressionism.[3]

"After the detailed report given by Archer who in 1932 visited the descendants of the *Patuas* living at Kalighat" says Hanah Knizkova of the Prague Museum who has recently made further intensive survey of unknown materials in the European Museum and who learned from them that the last bearers of the living Kalighatstyle tradition, brothers Kali Charan Ghose and Nibaran Chandra Ghose had died in 1930 at a very advanced age. The living descendants of the *patuas* had abandoned the traditional profession of their fathers and replaced it by others, perhaps more profitable ones.[4]

The chief characteristic deviations from the indegenous treatment with the British influence are met with in the effort of producing a three dimensional effect withthe help of deep indigo shading of the sky and neutralistic traits in the physiognomy with arrangement of hair, moustache, ornaments and folds of drapery (fig. 110). The out lines of the physiognomical structure was however all through drawn in extraordinarily bold sweeping lines. The more the artist deviated in the subject matter and shading and other extraneous trends the more they clung to the purity and attraction of the linear composition which held the frame of the works, spontaneous and charming, till the day of extinction. In some of the Kalighat *Pats* emphasis on the volume and mass of bodies, specially in the figures of women, has been laid by shading or tonal variations through wash-technique. Even in the pure linear drawings the same impression has been created with the help of flattening the lines by giving pressure on the brush, where necessary, in contrast against the thin sharp lines executed lightly, with a view to rendering plasticity of form. Another remarkable feature of Kalighat paintings is that the Kalighat *Patuas* applied pure water culours directly on the papers without mixing the same with white, following the manner of Western painting, rejecting also the conventional 'tempera' technique usually adopted by the former *Patuas*. Only of few costly *Pats*, illustrating some gods and goddesses, were painted in 'tempera colours'.

Besides contradicting the theory of Archer that Kalighat painting died after 1930 and substantiating the survival to this day of noted *Patuas* like Srish Chitrakar and others by the inclusion of personal interviews here and illustrating some of their traditional *Pats*, the truth of the following statement of Knizkova has to be tasted, "The designation Kalighat is not entirely suitable" she says "for another reason namely that we do not know where this genre was born. It might have been Kalighat but it might also very well have been a different pilgrimage site or any of the bazars of Calcutta. In so far as twentieth century authors link the emergence of this art with Calcutta, they evidently do so on the basis of an oral tradition which can no longer be authenticated or on the fact that the beginning of the 20th century the drawings were made only at Kalighat." We entirely agree with her statement.

There is enough evidence to prove that the Kalighat school was not an upstart school born with the patronage of the foreigners. It was just a continuation of the traditional *Patua* style current in the 18-19th centuries in the districts of Birbhum, Midnapur, Howrah, Nadia and 24 Parganas. Clearly tending towords "symbolism" that sometimes goes as far as abstraction, the Kalighat style with its strong feeling for volume, compactly stylized form in billowing lines and simple composition is amazingly reproduced in one of the Gopis seated at the end of the boat in the *Noukavihar* panel in a 18th century Krishnalila *Pat* from Birbhum in the Asutosh Museum (fig. 117). Moreover in the opening years of the fifties one of my Research scholars Sri Rabindranath Ganguly had a big line drawing representing seated Siva painted in his very presence by a very old folkartist Jogen *Patua* (who unfortunately died a couple of years later) in village Kulgachhia, Howrah district. Exactly drawn in the Kalighat style. Jogen *Patua* confided to Shri Ganguly that every year he was in the habit of crossing the Ganga river and spent several months in Kalighat in drawing "Kalighat" *Pats* on various subjects. *Patuas* from Midnapur, Hoogly and Nadia also habitually continued the practice.

The great majority of the Kalighat pictures, like their counterparts, everywhere in India, had a natural predilection towards depiction of mythological figures. But the most remarkable contribution of this group of artists, as opposed to the *Patuas* of Orissa who strictly adhered to religious and mythological subjects, lies in the fact that under the new socio-economic set up subsequent to the British occupation of the country they had been producing satirical portaitures of the contemporary society reflecting the composite Anglo-Indian culture specially the foppish *Babu* (dandy) culture of the town of Calcutta and seductive bosomy courtesans (fig. 111). "Throughout Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengali literature, a certain sumptuous magnificence had been predicted of the female body". The secular paintings of Kalighat school also offers a faithful documentary of the Tarakeswar Scandal of 1872-73 which involved Elokesi, the beautiful young wife of Nabin Chandra Banerji, her liason with the Mohanta of Tarakeswar temple and subsequent murder by her husband—the greatest sensation of Calcutta in the last century. Inspite of their stylized modelling and flouncy costume, Kalighat paintings are of ample charm with lucid outlines and smooth stately colouring except for the specific flesh colours of the gods and goddesses, the body colours of human beings are generally in yellow that is appropriate for emphasising the modelling against the plain or slightly tinted background.

Influenced apparently by the Krisnagar school of Nadia district, goddess Saraswati, painted perhaps in 1800 A.D. with the plastic feeling reinforced by the rising blue stalks on both side is a lavishly embellished piece with silver decor, *Mukuta* (tiara) and strings of necklace representative of early Kalighat style (fig. 118). Riding on a bull the monumental effect of Hara Parvati in the Asutosh Museum, enhanced by blue shading, is evidently a product of a later period. A mature gentleman with moustache and curly hair, smoking a *hooka* envisage a sophisticated painting of urban life outlined with the unfaltering brush stroke reminiscent of the modelling capacity of fluid lines of traditional Indian painting (fig. 119).

From the Asutosh Museum collection also comes an old brush drawing describing with amazing dexterity a cat with a lobster in its mouth (fig. 114). Calligraphic in quality, the boldness and the impressionistic vigour of the outline clearly reminiscent of the older 1880 colourful painting of the cat with a fish in its mouth in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.[5] It may be compared to another striking example from the Ramayana, where Jatayu is trying to devour the chariot of Ravana, eloping with Sita, within the majestic sweep of its extended beaks (fig. 115). The great bird has been endowed with an amplitude and monumentality surprisingly expressed with minimum economy of lines. It is indeed another significant work of consummate skill and draughtsmanship. Yet another example of great power from the same Museum mainly depending on the unerring flexibility of the brush is the Jagaddhatri group with attendant figures notable for the swelling sensitive curves of voluminous bodies recalling the Gopi in the *Nauka Vihar* panel of the Krishnalila *Pat* referred above (fig. 116).[6] Coloured variants show little difference with such familiar line drawings. Balanced rythm, detailed ornamentation, use of shading probably inspired by European influence are combined with a breadth of treatment in colour and composition. Apart from its integral values, this vivid and awe inspiring Kali (fig. 120), the presiding deity of Kalighat is of unusual interest. An Englishman was said to have taken with him to England in 1870, a bundle of Kalighat *Pats*. Dr. Douglas Barrett of the British Museum who happened to buy the bundle in an auction sale, was kind enough to present this singular piece belonging to the above collection, to the Asutosh Museum only a few years ago. It is a singular work, structural and monumental in form and content. Besides the Asutosh Museum and the Gurusaday Museum, Rabindra Bharati Museum and the Birla Academy in Calcutta the art section of the Indian Museum also possess some coloured specimens, including a nobleman and Gaur-Netai characterised by the same bold simplification and same robust and tubular forms. Importation of cheap foreign oleographs seems to have given a death blow to the Kalighat School of Painting.[7]

Contrary to the assertion of Archer and others that the Kalighat school became quite extinct after 1930, two drawings are reproduced here by one of the descendants of the *Patuas* Sris Chandra Chitrakar who still lives in the Patuatola (*Patua* quarter) of Kalighat.[8] Although somewhat stereotyped the artist has bravely tried to retain the spirit of Kalighat style in his Radha Krisna (fig. 121) and other interesting pieces recalling similar older drawings in the previous age. The compositional scheme of another (fig. 122) is formed by the figure of a man, kneeling on the ground embracing with a dagger in his left hand, a tiger which stands upright biting into the breast of the hunter with its teeth,[9] Srish Chandra can still reproduce with surprising competency old popular motifs of bewildering variety. With great difficulty, I could collect a few examples only the other day. Not deviating from the traditional pattern, these miniatures painted in water colours on '*tulat*' paper are truly remarkable form the amazing mastery of line, reminiscent of the best Indian pictorial language. An almost impressionistic painting of Lakshmi by the octogenerian *Patua* Baren Chitrakar, neighbour of Srischandra, formerly in my personal collection, now in the National Museum New Delhi, is notable for its summary treatment and emphasis on volume (fig. 123).

Of the contemporay European artists as pointed out by Archer, Matisse, Leger, etc. were perhaps visibly influenced by the forceful simplification and powerful rhythm of Kalighat style.[10] In the early part of the 20th century, Sunayani Devi, the gifted sister of the brothers, Abanindranath and Gaganendranath Tagore, pioneers of Indian renaissance movement in art, was the first contemporary Bengali artist to fall back upon *Pat* formulas; particularly a employment of the *Pater* "*Pater Chokh*" (type of eyes particularly used in the *Pat*) in her flat lyrical paintings of Radha Krishna. Nandalal Bose, the master artist of Neo-Bengal School was no less an admirer of the *Pat* technique and treatment. But the influence of *Pats*, specially of the Kalighat school is fully revealed in the works of one of the greatest artists of modern India, Jamini Roy. The unrivalled draftsmanship of his Cat and Fish, Mother and Child, Jatayu-Ravana etc. aided by sparkling expansive colours and linear sensibility are strongly reminiscent of the *Pat* style, specially that of Kalighat (cp. figs. 124 and 125). A resident of Calcutta for the major part of his life, he was manifestly attracted in his early life by the *Patuas* of Beliatore, where he was born and of Onda, another flourishing centre of *Pat* painting in Bankura district, West Bengal, in the closing years of the 19th century. Profile head, body in full front view and legs again in profile; duplication of the outline strictly limiting the swelling curves to emphasise the modelling capacity of lines; determined movement of swaying limbs, invariably reflect the folk mannerism in all his typically characteristic works. A happy integration of the basic ideals of modern western art with the volume and linear harmony of traditional Indian folk heritage, contributed to the creative talent of Jamini Roy, one of the supreme artists of the contemporary world.

Besides being the pioneer in bringing to the fore the significance of old Bengal *Pats*. Mr Ajit Ghose was the first Indian to point out the profound significance of the Kalighat *Pats* in the domain of Indian art and their undeniable influence on the cubist and impressionistic masters of Europe.

"They have not the studied elegance and striving after affect of the charmingly sensitive later drawings of the Kangra School with which they were contemporary" He further emphaises that "Often the line takes in the whole figure in such a way that it defies you to say where the artist's brush first touched the paper or where it finished its work .... again a drawing like the 'Sleeper'[11] shows such an amazing mastery of form and pose united to such perfect techniques that it leaves one wondering whether it is the work of a folk artist. 'The Sleeper' is a great composition perfect in linear rhythm and balance. It is the work of a genius. Now in the National Museum, New Delhi. strange as it would sound Indian artists have anticipated much of the latest in modern art. Some startling productions which anticipate by a century or more cubism and impressionism, are in the author's collection (fig. 112)."[12]

Mr Jamini Roy, scrupulously adheres to the Kalighat technique of the line taking in the whole figure in his mother & child (fig. 125). Influenced by traditional heritage both Jamini Roy and Nandalal Bose of modern West Bengal were creative artists by their own right guided by their own genius.

Although the Kalighat school is still flourishing in a decadent form, another school of Folk Painting still thrives at Krishnagore, district Nadia, to the north of Calcutta as noticed above. Krishnagore was the principal centre of Bengali culture, specially during the times of Maharaja Krishna Chandra of the 18th century, who was a great patron of art, music, and literature. Accompanied by the renowned modeller Mr Netai Pal of Kumartuli, the principal centre of clay idol making in the extreme north of Calcutta, I went to a workshop in Kumartuli, Lane to buy a *Chalachitra* (*Chala*=top, *Chitra*=painting) in 1942. Unfortunately during the last quarter of a century the habitual use of *Chalachitra* adorning the top of clay images of Durga, Saraswati etc. during the respective annual festivals, had almost been discarded in favour of modern decorations of arbitrary nature. Mr Pal who traced his lineage from Krishnagore artists. Even at that time the *Chalachitras* obtained by the Kumartuli workshops were usually supplied by the Krisnagore artists invariably having the surname Pal. It may be mentioned here that Krisnagore had been famous for the very realistic clay dolls from the days of the East India Company.

Naturally, the *Chalachitra* acquired by me personally (now in the National Museum, New Delhi) betray some realistic influanceal-though retaining the traditional linearism.

One of the finest examples of its kind the half circular *Chalachitra* can be devided into three consecutive segments. Painted against an indigo background the respective mythological figures are displayed forcefully in red, white, yellow, green and black, Framed by a conventioal cloud Siva is represented engrossed in playing the *Vina* at the crown, flanked by Parvati seated with Ganesa on lap in front of his abode at Mt. Kailasa seated guarded by a, bull on the right, (fig. 126) followed by Radha Krishna and the battle scene of Durga mounted on a ferocious lion attacking the frenzied rank of demon riders; the left wing being occupied by two groups of the *Abhiseka* of Rama and Sita followed by the battle scene between the goddess Kali and the host of demons riding elephants (fig. 127).[13] Vividly delineated in sparkling colours and fluent lines, the painted segments, interlaced with one another, maintaining the tradition of continuous narration through the assertion of gliding curves, of forms the respective shapes, volumes, masses, and peculiarly oriented. Attention may be drawn to the conspicuous shapes of the mouths of horses recalling the monumental horse led by the warrior at Konarak and the horse of the Kalki Avatara of Visnupur playing cards of the Eastern Indian Variety (fig. 7). Some excellent pieces of the Krisnagore *Pats* with sensitive decorations by the master artist Trailokyanath Pal of the 18th century depicting, Hara Parvati, coronation of Rama etc. signed by the artist himself may also be seen in the Asutosh Museum.

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1. As testified by the dwindling number of living Kalighat Patuas in Appendix A and B.
2. Archer, W.G. Kalighat Paintings Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1971, pls. 84-86.
3. Archer, W.G. *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2
4. Knizkova, Hanah—The Drawing of the Kalighat Style, National Museum, Prague, 1975, p. 38.

5. Archer, W.G,—*op. cit.*, pl. 55.
6. Another typical, Kalighat practice of emphasising the voluminous draperies of the local prostitutes.
7. The largest number of drawings are in British public collections viz. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Bodleian, Library, Oxford, India Office Library, British Museum, London; fowllowed by the Pushkin Museum, Moscow and the Napstek Museum, Prague.
8. See Appendix A and B about the living condition of the surviving Patuas and present state of their profession.
9. Compare Knizkova, H. pl. 4.
10. Archer, W.G.—*op. cit.*, pp. 17-18 and fig. 84, 85.
11. Probably by the master artist Nilmani Das.
12. Ghosh, Ajit, *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
13. Compare the Chalachitra crowning the Durga panel, Kalighat, *c.* 1870 A.D. Archer, W.G. *op. cit.*, pl. 32.
14. Huque Zulekha Hunting : On the Terracotta Temples of Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal, Bangladesh Lalitkala, Dacca Museum, Vol. 1 No. 2, 1970, pls. XXXIX-XLII.

CHAPTER XI

TRIBAL PATS OF BENGAL AND BIHAR

Chhotanagpur plateau, full of hills and jungles, itself an extension of the Deccan plateau, the home of the original primitive tribes of India (the *Adivasis*) is mainly inhabited on the fringe by the Santhals, Kols, Mundas and Hos distributed over Dhalbhumgarh, Singhbhum, Manbhum and Santhal Parganas in Bihar and the Bhumijas in Midnapur, Purulia, Bankura & Birbhum in West Bengal.

It may be mentioned at the outset, that the traditional *Pat* painting of West Bengal can be divided into two classes viz. the *Samajik Pat* concerned with the Ramayana, Mahabharata, legendary as well as sociological subjects popular with the Hindu caste population of the low lying deltaic portion and the western sloping land, and (2) the *Paralaulik Pat* painted by a different class of priest-painters known as *Jadu* (magician) or *Duari* (*door*) *Patua* for the exclusive use of Santhals and Bhumijas inhabiting the unlands of West Bengal and the hills and dales of Bihar. The most important ceremony connected with the *Adivasi* tribals is known as the "*Chakhsudana*" (bestowal of the eye sight). Whenever a Santhal, man, woman dies the *Jadu Patua* appears at the honse of the bereaved family with a ready-made sketch of the deceased done from his own imagination. There is no attempt at verisimilitude but the picture merely consists of drawings of an adult or a child, or a male or female according to the age and sex of the deceased. The *Jadu Patua* presents the picture completely drawn in colour with one omission only viz. the iris of the eye. He shows the picture to the relatives and tells them that the deceased was wandering about blindly in the other world and will continue to to so until they send gifts or money or some other articles through him viz. *Jadu Patua* himself. To enable him to perform the act of *Chakshudana* or bestowal of eye sight, the relatives make presents of money or some other articles of domestic use to the *Jadu Patua* for transmission to the deceased. The *Jadu Patua* then put the finishing touch to the picture by performing the act of *Chakshudana* or supplying the iris of the eye in the picture of the deceased. It is perhaps from this semimagical practice that the *Jadu Patua* derives his name."[1]

"As we climb to the western Hill-tract" says Sudhangshu Kumar Ray", we meet different class of priest painters known as *Jadu* or *Duari* Patua. Their arts & crafts are intimately connected with the different Tribal groups living around them. In the scrolls painted by the *Samajik*-group of painters we see that the Judgement scenes have been given prominence, whereas the scenes from the lives of deceased persons enjoying earthly comforts in the Afterworld have been emphasized in the paintings of the *Duari-Patua.*[2]

"A *Jadu-Patua* is an undisputed authority on the semi-magical mortuary rites of the deceased. He knows how a man is put to death by a Pisacha,[3] an evil spirit. It is he who can lead the dead bodily from this world to heaven—an act for which he is ritually capable and rewarded. But on a similar occasion a *Samajik-Patua* would depend on Yama, the God of Death, who alone can decide the destiny of the soul, but only after judging the good and evil deeds the deceased has done in his or her life time. The righteous are allowed to enter heaven as a reward, while the wicked are detained in hell to suffer. Thus a man is inspired by art to practice good deeds in his present and future births".

"Besides this, *Jadu-patuas* represent Tiger Gods and the two deities Satyapir (Satyaa narayana) and Kalu Ghazi in these scrolls (fig. 131). Animals specially the lion and the tiger, play a prominent part in these scroll paintings. The noble animals are shown in full face and the ignoble animals in profile. Their paintings are characterized by primitive qualities viz. vigour, naive directness, circular dottings and simple and pure colourings. Later on these *Jadu-patuas* began to draw the scenes of Krisnalila and Ramlila. Though the conceptions of the subject matters have been borrowed, the technique of the *Jadu-patuas* still remains essentially primitive.[4]" Squāre or rectangular, the scrolls paintings on *Tulat* paper by thc *Jadu-patuas* are invariably smaller in size than the *Jarano-pats* or *Samajik-pats*. They are all done in earth colours, viz. gamboje, yellow ochre & black. Describing scenes of the Genesis or Krisnalila, the larger scrolls painted after the *Samajik-Pats* are however narrower in breadth depicting the different scenes continuosly outlined in black against a background of greenish or yellow ochre tonality.

"Some murul paintings in the style of *Jadu-patua* can be seen in the temples of Bankura district in west Bengal viz. the Siva temple in Langram, (less than 100 years old). This district practically undisturbed for a long time from foriegn influence still holds in its bosom places like Mallabhum-the land of wrestlers where 'the ancient Hindu culture and art survive even to the present day to an extent unkown to the rest of Eastern India, from the pictorial point of view, these murul paintings occupy an unique place and they have all the attributes of strength, vitality and simple rhythm which are noted in primitive art."[5] They recall similar purely linear forms in the unfinished set of Visnupur playing cards, about 100 years old, collected by me from the late artist Satish Fauzdar in 1940, strangely echoing identical wriggling forms of Anantasayi Narayana and 12 Nilas (monkeys) occouring in horizontal strips flanking the upper part of modern Jagannatha *Pats*, surprisingly abstract in black outlines of amazing force (fig. 46).

A very old and rare *Paralaukik* painting, (col. pl. 24) collected by late Sudhangsu Kumar Ray from Binpur, Dt. Midnapur, while he was the Research scholar of Asutosh Museum, depicts a Bhumija woman of Western Bengal (said to be the Rani of Kamalpur) in the Afterworld attended by her four maidservants, serving food, and fanning with palm-leaf fans, one of them holding a brass water vessel. Orissan influence is betrayed in framing the images within far flung arches, the pillow and the manner of wearing the drapery after the Amaru Sataka paintings of Mayurbhanj manuscript.[6] It is predominently painted in exuberant emerald green on Indian red and brown background, and "is the most important document of this type of tribal art ever discovered in West Bengal".

Fairly old, the striking painting by a *Jadu-Patua* representing an old man with a stick seated on a *charpoy* with a spittoon on the ground, in my private collection, was obtained from Binpur more than fifty years ago. The closely cropped hair of the head and firmly built body in yellow ochre, wearing a Vaishnava beaded necklace (*Kanthi*) proclaim him to be a distinguished person, perhaps the head-man of the village. The lines are strong and swiftly drawn Power of observation is skillfully revealed in the efficiently drawn contour of the body contrasting with the uneven outline of the stick (fig.128).

Happily a large number of small panels of *Chakshudana Pat* depicting clumsilly painted men and women with utensils and the totem cock or duck including *Pisachas*, who purposely desecrate the domestic utensils as an omen of the impending death in the family, have been collected for my personal collection from a newly discovered *Jadu-Patua* centre in Murunia in Midnapur district bordering Bihar (figs. 129, 130). Using only a limited range of colours in a small rectangular space drawn in earth colours like white, burnt amber etc. the figures are extermely simple but effectively portrayed. In conception as well as in technique they are characterised by utter simplicity and boldness.[7]

Situated near the border of Bankura and Midnapur districts Binpur with the neighbouring village of Sanhrpur was formerly a thriving centre of *Jadu-Patuas*. But recent survey in 1976 has revealed that all of them have migrated from Binpur—with the exception of one family only—to Murunia and a few other villages. Represented in flat two dimensional style, a compenently drawn traditional *Adivasi Pat* painted about thirty or forty years ago, has been acquired for the Crafts Museum, New Delhi, from village Nola in Dumka sub-division, Santhal Parganas, Bihar. Vertically painted on paper white background, instead of the usual horizontal allignment of Midnapur & Murunia, the upper one shows a leader riding on a lanky horse with accented sharp lines and limited use of colours followed by a lower panel showing soldiers carrying guns, and wild beasts (fig. 136). Is it reminiscent of the Santhal rebellion ? Though not *Paralaukik* in character and comparatively narrower and smaller than *Samajik Pat* it may also represent a *Judu Pat* dealing with the events in the life of Satya Pir. It is a matter of gratification that although Sanhrpur scrolls have become extinct during the last fifty years or so, a magnificent scroll, distinguished by a skillful narration of the Genesis according to primitive Santhal folk lore, formerly in the collection of Ajit Ghose has also been acquired by me for the Crafts Museum. Besides being a *Jadu pat* more than one hundred years old, fortunately it bears the signature of Haricharan Chitrakar of Binpur itself. Three primitive gods and goddesses represented by Singbonga, Marangburu and Jeherera appear on the topmost panel followed by the primeval creatures fish, serpent, duck and other insects who were invoked by the *Adivasis* to rescue the earth from the all pervading flood. Next the original Santhali man & women Pilchu Haram and Plichu Buri are shown being born out of two bursting eggs. In course of time their progeny consist of six sons and six daughters. As a result of heavy drinking bout of *Haria*, they quarrel and separate. Subsequently after many years of wandering in a forest they accidentally meet and the adult youths, boys and maidens, not recognising each other marry—and so the numerous Santhal clans started. The incidents regarding the birth of the world is delineated picturesqely and dramatically in a colourful style of great charm (fig. 135).

About three years ago two panels of a Krishnalila Pat painted by a *Jadu Patua* from Bharatpur, Dt. Bankura, depict scenes of the Vastraharana in a very swift summery manner against plain background (figs. 132, 133) visualising the row of saucy Gopis with pitchers on their head and the schematic branches of the trees, on which Krishna and the stolen garments of the Gopis are perched in simple unsophisticated manner. Similarly three pert milkmaids, proceeding in uniform style, with pots balanced on their heads (pl. 134), constitute a delightful scene from a competently drawn with swift lines a Krishnalila scroll from Dumka, Santhal Parganas, Bihar (Asutosh Museum collection). It is a matter of no little significance that this was painted only in 1945 when the Patua was still living.

Drawn on a white background the sharp, clear cut outline is bordered by running dots—a characteristic rarely noticed. The stiff cylindrical, lower portion of the figures supports the circulatory movements of the hands and of the mode of wearing the *Sari* so that it frames the head in a attractive manner; forms like this are to be found only in the Santhal productions from Midnapur and the neighbouring regions. The green of the *Saris* is matched by the yellow of the bodies and by the geen blouses, the middle one being light pink.

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3. Mukherjee Ajitkumar—Folk art of Bengal, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 17-18, figs. 28, 29.
4. Mukherjee, Ajitkumar, Modern Art in India, Calcutta, 1956 Two striking Gazi Pats in India, in paper scrolls (1) Satyapir in white dress riding a ferocious orange coloured tiger spotted with white and black dots and (2) an as coloured Kalu Gazi riding a demonia black tiger on top, superimposed on two yellow men flanking a hut. Dumka, Santhal Parganas, Bihar. W.G. Archers collection, London.
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6. Roy S.K.—*op. cit.*, p. 53, pls. XXIII and pl. XXIV.
7. For some older and better examples of sturdy Vaisnava and Vaisnavis with rosaries from Bankura Visnupur see (1) Mukherjee, A.K. Folk Art of Bengal, Calcutta-1939, pls. XXIV XXV. (2) Roy, S.K. Ritual art of the Bratas of Bengal, Calcutta, 1961 showing an identical Bhumcia woman in the afterworld from Binpur pl. XXII.
8. Mukherjee, A.K.—Modern Art in India, Calcutta, p. 56, pl. 58.

CHAPTER XII

DASAVATAR PLAYING CARDS OF VISNUPUR AND ORISSA

"GANJIFA"—"SARA"—*GHATA*

The terracotta horse of Panchmura near Vishnupur, West Bengal, has now become a familiar object of interior decoration of some connoiseurs inforeign countries. The particular *Gharana* of Visnupur songs is also appreciated throughout the country. The lovely terracotta wall decorations of the Vishnupur temples have won universal praise. But few people at large are yet acquainted with the colourful *Dasavatara* playing cards indegenous to Vishnupur and the peculiar rules of the same.

So long we have been dealing with square and rectangular painted surfaces as well as scrolls. Circular paintings were also in vogue in Bengal and Orissa. The round *Dasavatara* playing cards are fairly ancient and really exciting. We now know that different varieties of the game of cards was current in different regions of India from very early times. But we must rememeber here that these set of cards is quite unlike the modern Western playing cards which we now use. These cards are circular, fairly thick and each and every card is painted skilfully in multicolour by the folk artists, like their counterparts in Orissa which was perhaps the original home of the Bengal variants, or the Bengali variants may have been earlier than their Orissan counterparts.

According to Haraprasad Sastri "tradition has it that the Malla kings of Visnupur invented this game when they were in the zenith of their glory. The Malla Rajas have left behind them an era of which 120 corresponds to 1695 A.D. and I fully believe that the game was invented about eleven of twelve hundred years before the present date. The reasons for my supposing so are these :

In the orthodox list of the ten incarnations Buddha's place is the ninth. But in the order of the cards, he has the fifth place assigned to him, or rather he is one of the first five, having four hands. The antiquity of the orthodox list goes back to Jayadeva in the 12th and to Ksemendra in the 11th century. These cards must therefore have been invented before the formation of the orthodox list at a time when Buddha was regarded as an incarnation, but held a place in the list different from that now assigned to him."[1]

According to some foreign scholars on the other hand, the game of Ganjifa originated in Central Asia and was introduced to India from the court of Timur in Samarkand. Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty (1520-30 A.D.) first introduced the game in India. Akbar his grandson, (1555-1605 A.D.) was very fond of this game and with the Moghul conquest it was introduced in Visnupur.

Abul Fazl, a close associate of Emperor Akbar describes in a chapter of *Ain-in-Akbari* the game the Emperor liked to play. Apart from chess; mention is made of two types of Ganjifa-with 12 sets and 144 cards, which was found too cumbersome by Akbar and the other a game of 96 cards in eight sets which he preferred. This later games known as Mughal Ganjifa, associated its sets with administrative departments of the Moghul court. A similar game was played in Iran about the same period.

While currently the western type of card games are relentlessly replacing the Ganjifa, certain indegenous games continue to be played in certain areas viz. Visnupur in West Bengal, Puri, Sonepur & Ganjam in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Sawantvadi in Maharastra. Amongst these the more popular games are the Moghul Ganjifa described above, which represent the 10 *Avataras* (incarnations of Visnu), in its 120 card packs, divided into 10 sets, another 144 card game incorporates figures from Indian mythology and tradition on the Ganjifa. This also includes the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

A selective representation of the unique set of "*Chiriya Tash*" envisaging varities of birds in exquisitely delicate poses against colourful background by the sixteen year old now about Krisna Maharana of Damodarpur, Dt. Puri, from my own collection (acquired in 1942) is reproduced here (col. pl. 25).

Asta Malla or the eight wrestlers is the special name given by the village craftsmen of Ganjam district in Orissa. The vizir-cards of the game depict in vigorous 'folk style eight heroic battles, between the young Krishna and the succession of demons sent out to destroy him by the evil king Kamsa of Mathura. They show Krishna subduing the serpent king Kaliya (*Kaliya damana*), killing the ogress Putana, breaking the beak of demon-crane Bakasura, fighting the demon horse Kesi (*Kesi Nidhana*) and the demon Sakatasura who tried to crush him under a cart etc.

In 1940 I found the *Dasavatara* cards used to have been prepared with the gum made with tamarind seeds or rice-starch. A strip of cloth was first well covered with gum and then overlaid with another strip. Three layers of cloth were thus dried hard in the sun. Subsequently the ground on one side was again dried by applying a thick layer of powdered chalk. Afterwards the surface was duly polished with *ela* of fine *Jhama* (brick) and the proposed cloth cut into round pieces of four inches in diameter. By applying indigenous colours the separate pieces were then enlivened by the artists to suitably depict figures of Rama, Balarama, Parasurama. Nrishingha, Vamana, Jagannatha (or Buddha), Varaha, Matsya, Kurma and Kalki, the ten *Avataras* of Vishnu as well as their respective symbols viz. bow and arrow of Rama, *Gada* of Balarama, axe of Parasurama, *Chakra* of Nrisingha, *Kamandulu* of Vamana, *Padma* of Jagannatha or Buddha, *Samkha* of Varaha, fish of Matsya, tortoise of Kurma and sword of Kali. Each *Avatara* was accompanied by a Ujir (Vizir) or Mantri, so that each set consist of ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two and one i.e. total of 11 playing cards.

As the game of chess is played with martial figures representing king, minister, horse, elephant & boat, similarly this warlike game-cards is also played with arranged pictures of minister, general, infantry and cavalry. Distinguished by bright sparkling colours, floral, animal or human figures are outlined by the artist on separate pieces with swift flowing brush strokes. After the cards are finished the unpainted sides are finally smoothly polished with vermillion mixed with lacquer. It contributes to the strength and hardness of the cards and prolongation of life.

Identical ingenuity and originality in the technique in the playing of the game is paralleled by simillar traits in the imagination, preparation and meaningful use of colours. Besides the two groups devoting superior and inferior status of the *Avataras*, there is the question of relative importance of the two groups.

The circular cards of Visnupur are distinguished by a symphony of colours heavily painted and richly decorated. The pictures taken from the Hindu pantheon almost invariably represent Visnu & his ten *Avataras*. Consisting of 120 pieces and divided into ten groups with references to the *Avataras*, each group is composed of twelve cards. The groups are named after the *Avataras*, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha or Jagannatha and Kalki serially. Each *Avatara* has a symbol, and the minor cards bear the respective symbols serially viz. a fish, a tortoise, a conch-shell, a wheel, a water-pot, an axe, an arrow, a club, a lotus and a sword. The colour scheme is nearly the same for 11 groups, with minor variations. There are also packs of forty-eight cards.

"The making of a card is an intriguing process" as a writer in the 'Statesman', Calcutta has recently shown. "The cards are circular in shape, the diameter varying from four to five inches, First of all, pieces of thin cloth are pasted in three layers with starch made from tamarind seeds, when dry, a coating of liquid chalk is applied and the application is repeated till a perfectly white surface is obtained. The surface is then polished by rubbing it with stones. When the base is thus formed, the pasted pieces of cloth are trimmed to circular shapes and made ready for painting. The colour scheme of the paintings is delightful in its variety and tone. The colours and paints are all indigeneous, made in their own homes by the painters themselves. The recepies are more or less family secrets. The backs of the cards are given a hard coating of dull vermillion and lacquer which makes them stiffer and less susceptible to dust and dirt". The Fauzdars of Sankharitola, Visnupur are now the only makers of these cards.

Having a distinctive type, swelling forms of the Visnupur cards are stylistically different from the popular Ganjifa of Orissa, emphasised by the tilt of the face, determined movement of sleek undulating limbs. The two dimensional linear conception, bulging out in bold robust rythm is typical of the Bengali folk idiom. In the Puri cards of Orissa, hot yellow figures are generally silhouetted against a flashing scarlet background. Blue of Krishna, white of Balarama and green of Rama are exceptions. Sharply defined against a floral background, all the figures have a Ajantesque plastic volume inspite of the linear character of the drawing (fig. 137).

The manner of the Visnupur *Tashas* in which (a) the entire background of green is filled up by the voluptuous limbs of Lakshmi in red skirt and *dupatta* framed by the rotatory movements of delicate ears of paddy held in her hands; (b) the plain white background of the ponderous pair of wrestlers (Mallas contributed to the distinct appelation Mallabhum, the land of Mallas); (c) paralleled to by identical white background of the *Shikar* scene showing the Raja in red, mounted on a beautifully blue elephant holding in its trunk a yellow striped tiger and (d) lastly the red background of the fiery Kalki *Avatar* relieved by the blue dress of the god riding a galloping white charger, illustrate the striking folk imagination of the artist in representing ingenious colour harmony and animated rhythm conforming to the circular shape of the cards.

Haraprasad Sastri observes "the elephant rider, the horseman, the wrestlars and the king in the ace remind one of the *Asvapatis*, the *Gajapatis* and *Narapatis* so often mentioned in the inscriptions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries". Contrary to this opinion I firmly believe that the figures and floral motifs on the modern Visnupur cards we find the indelible stamp of Mughal art and culture as reflected by the figures of Lakshmi, Kalki, the *Shikar*, scene and the wrestlers specially modelled on a Mughal lady, a Mughal cavalry soldier, the customery Mughal hunting scene and Mughal wresting bouts respectively (col. pl. 26).

It is unfortunate that this particular type of card playing has become almost extinct in Bengal although it is still popular in Orissa, because the *Dasavatara* cards are not so cheap and easily available, like the modern western pack of cards. The comparative cost is very high indeed because of the amount of labour, cost of colours, lac, vermillion, cloth, chalk and gum which are required in the craftsmanship of these 120 playing cards. Generally the current market price of this set comes to about rupees one hundred fifty to two hundred. But the craftsman who are proverbially poor are sometimes forced to sell these products for a meagre sum of forty or fifty rupees only, because of want. Forced by dwindling demand due to prohibitive cost, the craftsmen are also compelled to leave hereditary profession in favour of other economically viable occupations. It is to be lamented that the age long tradition of painting illustrating Bengal's own individual expressive phases of craft and culture starting from the Mughal period is on the verge of complete extinction.

The present condition of the craft and craftsmen are intimately connected with survival of this ancient cultural game of Bengal. Today when countries all over the modern world are striving their best to rescue their own national arts, crafts and culture, even their forest and wild life from slow decay and destruction, should we fail in our efforts to revive our folk arts, folk games—a striking feature of our peculiar cultural trait? It is indeed not very difficult to preserve and reintroduce the decaying craft and game of Visnupur cards. Besides a market in our own country for this particular craft and game if we try properly, it is sure to find a significant place in the international market fetching a substantial amount of foreign currency. What is wanting is national effort in this direction.

Sara

A very interesting example of the close connection between art and ritual is furnished by the painted *Saras* or circular covers which are in extensive use in rural Bengal even of the present day among Hindu women of all classes on the occasion of the harvest festival known as Lakshmi Puja. Formerly these *Saras* had been generally painted by men of the potter caste of East Bengal who had since migrated to West after partition of India. They used to be assisted (even now)by the women folk. On each *Sara* there is invariably a representation of Lakshmi, the goddess of plenty and harvest, usually mounted on an owl (the sagacious night bird who kills rats, the pest of paddy) attended by two females and there is usually also a representation of a comb symbolical of her toilet because she is also the godess of beauty and of an ear of paddy in each of her hands symbolical of plentyful harvest. Besides the harvest, the covers often contain representations of Radha Krishna and Durga who are the most popular deities of Hindu Bengal and often figures of these details are given the most prominent place, Lakshmi and her attendants taking a subordinate place at the bottom segment.

The heriditery talent of the village potters of undivided Bengal is revealed by the manner in which the lines, the structure and inclination of the figures have been adopted to the curvature of the surface of the cover. This is particularly shown in the spontaneous application of line and colours within the compartmental panels of the *Sara* from Faridpur, now in Bangaladesh (Asutosh Museum Collection) dividing the concave surface (fig. 138). The colour scheme in the *Saras*, 10 to 16 inches in diameter, is composed of yellow, red, blue and dark green. The rings round the rim and bands in the middle are in alternate sweeps of red, blue and black. After the Puja ceremony is over the *Saras* are hung up on the wall with a string passed through two holes on the top. They used to form a wall decoration in all Hindu homes in rural Bengal, mainly in the eastern portion.[2] Retaining more or less the composition and colour scheme but rather clumsilly treated, a Large Lakshmi *Sara* with a blue background has been collected by me only a couple of years ago (fig. 139) from a migrant potter family from Bangladesh settled in Kasba, a southern suburb of Calcutta barely a mile from my home in Ballygunj.

Ghat

Bengal is the home of venomenous snakes. Therefore the popular mind tries to propitiate Manasa, the snake godess through anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms. She is still worshipped both in *Pat* and *Ghat*. Again collected about forty years ago from Faridpur, Bangladesh, this uniquely shaped earthenware *Ghat* now preserved in the Asutosh Museum, (fig. 140) is remarkable because of their vibrant colours, exciting delineation of the hissing goddess, fearful and benigh at the same time, frontal holding two snakes in both hands, the image easilly hugs the undulating form of the vessel gradually transmitted into the widely flairing rim. Only a few years ago Prof. Bussaburger of Missouri University U.S.A., a close friend of mine and an ardent enthusiast of Indian folk art, presented to me a small Manasa *Ghat* (fig. 141) by a migrant artist from Barisal, Bangladesh, collected by him from Madhyamgram, Dt. 24 Parganas in the north-eastern environs of Calcutta, showing a beautiful four handed Manasa gracefully scated cross legged crowned by a tiara of snakes.

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CHAPTER XIII

TECHNIQUE OF ORISSAN AND BENGAL PAT PAINTING

Orissa

"All the Orissa Paintings, Says Krasa, might have once originated in the very environs of Jagannath's temple, but today their creators may be found more in the villages around the Puri district or other neighbouring districts. As in previous times, so even today whole families have been living there in which traditional process of material preparation, technology, painting style and an individual manner of creative executing has passed from one generation to another. The number of these folk-painters is no longer too great and this number is rapidly decreasing. The impact of cheap colour prints has had an unpropitious effect in Puri too and therefore in many cases the younger generations of the painter's families have been looking round for other occupations. Lately the local authorities as well as the Orissa School of Arts have devoted their attention to the revival of handicraft and fold art. There has been an effort to revive the production of paintings by establishing cooperatives and the finding of new outlets besides the traditional market so that in the future these charming samples of Orissa creative folklore may find their way to the art connoisseures in greater numbers. On the other hand, however, there is a grave danger that the commercializing of the whole process might lead to a subordinating of the traditional patterns, feeling for art and the taste of the village artists in favour of the fashion demand. The material is changing; plastics and synthetic colours are penetrating into "popular art"; under the influence of the interest of European and American tourists new patterns and much demand for erotic subjects are emerging. The village painters also produce to order their figural and ornamental motives on a paper foundation, e.g. on New Year cards.

Genuine Orissa paintings, as a rule, have not been done on hand-made paper or any other paper foundation and thus they also unmistakably differ from the other Indian folk-paintings. The pictures bought by the Vishnu pilgrims and the visitors to Jagannath's temple were made of a more solid and durable material. It was linen cloth, made by a special process, on which the folk-artists have been painting since time immemorial. Only in neighbouring Bengal perhaps, the paintings on canvas have also developed but the lay-out is different. The Orissa painted pictures are also called "pata" or "patachitra" (i.e. pata-cloth, chitra-picture) in contrast to the coloured illustrations of the Orissa manuscripts or of the mural folk-paintings. This traditional material made of linen cloth is the ideal foundation for the paintings, being pliable but relatively strong, and on the whole resistant to humidity, neither warping nor losing its shape, and has proved to be suitable for painting large canvasses of several square metres. Its correct preparation is, of course, important; the folk-painters inherited the technology from their ancestors and all the necessary raw materials are supplied by natural resources from the surrounding coutryside.

First of all, it is necessary to chose a cotton fabric of desirable structure and fineness. If possible without any surface-irregularities, knots or weak spots, and to adjust it to the desired size. Two pieces of cloth of the same size are stuck together with a home-made vegetable paste produces from the tamarind-seed. Then a powder is prepared from the soft clay-stone that can be found in abundant quantities throughout Eastern Orissa; a greenish-white paste is then made out of the powder or rather a sort of consistent paste with which both sides of the two fold stiffened cloth are thickly smeared, and after the canvas has been treated in this way, it is ready for use. The treated surface, to which the colours have been applied, is then rubbed over with a rounded stone sea-shell or a piece of smooth wood, and when dried out, it is given further finishing treatment. Painting-foundation is made, in bulk, of larger pieces of cloth rolled from a bale; the finished painting-foundation, sometimes several metres long, is then rolled up again. When necessary, a length may be cut off for individual pictures, usually of a larger size.

The original dyes were also of natural provenance and home-made. According to the provenance of the dye, the number of colour-shades and their combination, the age of the painting may be best assessed. Originally, the village painters used to work with a few basic colours of very expressive, sometimes startling shades which they applied in sharp contrasting combinations. They were mostly in black and white red, green, yellow and indigo blue. In isolated cases on older paintings brown can also be discerned. It was a principle never to blend colours. Only at the present time may we come across pastel-shades and colours obviously bought in the town or village bazaar. In quite isolated cases a finished pata-painting can be found executed in black and white only, either at the artist's house or at a dealer's. It is evident that these are new, untraditional products although sometimes very interesting, for they present the basic drawing more forcefully. The colours are mixed in the shallow wooden bowls or bowls of coco-nut shell; they paint with either coarse or fine brush fitted to wooden holders. They are usually stored in quivers made out of hollow joints of fairly thick bamboo trees. After the painting is finished.

After the painting is finished and perfectly dried out it is sometimes smeared over with a transparent lacquer which provides the paints with a more penetrating brightness and lustre, protects it agains handling and also prevents it from damage by water or humidity.

The painters—chitrakars sit on the ground or on a low stool and hold the canvas on their laps (fig. 142). At first they draw the basic outlines of the painting. Then they fill-up the main coloured areas, and finally draw the contours, the minute lines and all the details of the paintings. The size of patas vary. The temple-visitors are satisfied, for the most part, with the smaller pictures—square, oblong or circular, measuring not more than perhaps a quarter of a square metre, or even smaller. Only the wealthier pilgrims can afford the more expensive paintings usually of a larger size and more elaborated. Square or oblong pictures measuring more than half-a-metre are rare. However, the larger patas are uncommon and were only painted to order for as a special purposes; they are mostly complicated compositions of the whole of Jagannath's temple and its precincts surrounded by scenes from the Krishna legend and also by scenes from other myths of Ancient India, incidental to the Vishnu Cult. I have myself seen the largest painting in the collection of the Ashutosh Museum of Calcutta University which measures about 220 cm by 120 cm. In the same manner as the chitrakars paint on two fold foundations they also decorate teracotta vases, masks made from waste-paper formed either on a wooden mould or carved out of a special light wood, wooden caskets as well as the images of the deities, and above all, miniature copies of gigantic wooden blocks, hewn and painted, to represent the divine Trinity, which is placed in the central shrine of Jagannath's temple."

At the beginning of my systematic Survey of Orissan Arts and Craft in 1941, I had requested Rama Maharana to give me an outline of the technique of Orissa *Pats*, but he declined saying that it was a trade secret. Subsequently I went to his village home and repeated the request. At last he agreed provided I keep the process a closely guarded secret. His verbatim report translated from Oriya is given below in elaborate detail.

At the initial stage, he said, old or new cloth has to he sized according to required length (six cubits by ten cubits) or the entire length of the sheet has got to be fixed to a mat with iron or bamboo nails. Then gum made of ground tamarind seeds has got to be prepared on fire and then two men should be employed to stretch half of the sheet tightly, to carefully apply the paste on the entire ground with the help of hands. The other half has got to be similarly treated. Afterwards another piece of same size cloth has to be pasted on the previous one after application of the gum the double sheet should be dried in the sun after both sides are again applied with paste. Then soapstone should be properly ground and manually applied evenly on both the sides of the *Pat* mixed with proportionate gum (quarter amount in the month of Baisakh i.e. summer and in equal amount in the rainy season.

After having cut the *Pat* sheet according to requirement the surface should be polished with smooth stone at first with the help of a piece of wet cloth again after sprinkling some water on it after drying. Then the ground to be painted has got be cut, either square, rectangular or circular, leaving some margin, but having each side of the *Pat* dried and polished twice.

Then the painting (*Chitrakama*) starts, five brushes are made from hair of mice and thick brushes from the hair of buffaloes by the artists themselves by tying them to a bamboo stick. Outlines have to be sketched by mixing water with red or yellow ochre. Images are then drawn first with deep white made by rubbing conchshell, followed by application of necessary colours in different areas viz. blue on Krisna in the Radhakrisna pair, yellow on Radha which should simultaneously be applied on the *Mukuta*, clothes, flute as well as ornaments of Krisna. Ornaments should be finished with white and details with yellow ochre or Indian red. Hairs of Radhakrisna and the borders of draperies should be painted with thick black, to heighten the effect of the eyes and face white touches should also be applied. Lastly the trees must be painted in green colour, branches in grey and flowers in white. Finally decorative motifs of the background or border dots and Sankhpatra (conchshell and leaves) should be painted, specially.

The various limbs of the *Jugalmurti* (Radhakrisna pair entwined with each other) should be finished with very refined black lines, lotus with white outline, water with blue colours. Borders in black background should be finished with black, yellow and white.

Recipes for preparing the indgenous colours by the artists themselves are also given as follows :—

(1) Red—by rubbing *Hingul* stone.

(2) Yellow—by rubbing *Haritala*.

(3) White—small fragments of seashells ground first and then rubbed six times with water to make it smooth.

(4) Black—from soots of *Pradipa* (lamp) or hurricane lanterns.

(5) Gerua (Indian red)—*Geru Pathar* (ochre) should be rubbed first and then mixed with the gum of *Kayeth Bel* fruit (woodapple) in large quantity of water. The surface water only to be used as the colour, the sediment to be rubbed repeatedly with conchshell powder.

(6) Green—by mixing blue with yellow.

To make it mild all colours should mixed with white (tempera). To prepare the final varnish coating hot liquid lac with the help of plantain leaf and a piece of cloth. Wood apple gum to be secured from the oozing of the tree trunk.

West Bengal

In course of the recent documentation of Folk and Tribal Arts of West Bengal, my Research Fellow Mr. Barendra Nath Makar made an intensive servey of Traditional Pats and Patuas of Midnapur district in 1976-77. He observed in his report :—

"The Chitrakaras as a caste are spread over throughout India. They have the same rank within the nine caste—Craftsmen, (Nabasakha) e.g. *Malakara*, *Karmakara*, *Kangsakara*, *Sankhakara*, *Tantubaya*, *Kumbhakara*, *Sutradhara*, *Swarnakara* and *Chitrakara*, all of whom said to have been originated from the union of Viswakarma with apsara Ghritachi, according to the Hindu mythology. The Chitrakaras paint pictures. They draw different pictures in different methods by using various designs and colours following different patterns of regional culture. A large number of the Chitrakaras live in the District of Midnapure, West Bengal. Though, in course of modern conditions this community are on the verge of extinction, still many of them have not fully given up their profession. Presently they are quite unable to compete with the films. There are about one hundred and fifty (150 Chitrakara families living at the following villages of Midnapur District; the total population of which is about one thousand and two hundred (1200) :—

Population verified by personal survey in 1972 Thana	*District Midnapore Name of the village*	*(West Bengal) 1972 Patua Population*	*1980 Patua Population*
1. Nandigram	(1) Habichak	50	40
	(2) Muradipur	60	55
	(3) Nankarchak	75	60
	(4) Kumirmara (Amdabad)	125	115
2. Daspur	(1) Basudevpur	35	30
	(2) Narajole	50	60
3. Pingla	(1) Naya	75	110
	(2) Maligram	30	20
4. Mahisadal	(1) Thekuachak	41	45
5. Panakura	(1) Keshabbarh	65	70
6. Tamluk	(1) Siuri	30	25
7. Sutahata	(1) Akabpur	75	55
	(2) Chaitanyapur	80	80
	(3) Keshabpur	60	55
	(4) Deulpota	40	50
8. Debra	(1) Kuliyachandanpur	25	35
9. Midnapore Sadar	(1) Hariyatara	12	18
	(2) Barua	6	Nil
10. Jhargram	(1) Jhargram	10	15
11. Kharagpur	(1) Maguria	55	40
12. Bhagabanpur	(1) Hanschara	45	35

The *Chitrakara* is locally called *Patua*. The *Patuas* of Midnapur show theirs scroll Patas painted like a film-strip on the basis of the subject selected from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagabata, Manasamangala, Chandimangala and other Mangala Kabyas relating to semi-divine folk-gods and goddesses. In the post-independence period," at the instance of the Govt. of India (Field Publicity), they now draw exhibits of the life history of modern great men, family planning and interesting episodes of the local society.

"A section of the Chitrakaras is also called Jadupatua. They claim themselves as a section of the Bumijas. They live mainly at Sarpur (Binpur P.S.) and Murunia (Sankrail—p.s.) in the District of Midnapore. These patuas are also found in Bankura, an adjoining District of Midnapore. They generally paint *Parulaukik Chitras*. There are differences between the Yamapata of the Chitrakaras and the *Paralaukik Chitras* of the Jadupatuas. The main difference lies in the subjects. They choose in the *Patas* of the Chitrakaras Yama, the lord of death who is depicted as sitting in judgment. He gives orders of reward and punishment according to the nature of good or evil work per performed by men. But in the Jadupatas, men are depicted as enjoying happiness of this world after death in heaven."

"(1) COLOUR :— The Chitrakaras use mainly the following five basic colour : (i) Red (ii) Blue (iii) Yellow (Halud rang) (iv) Black and (v) White. They mix these five original colours in different ratio to obtain different shades of compound-colours. These colours are made from different objects. As for example, white from *Sabeda Salt* and a hard kind of chalk found in the District of Bankura; yellow from Peurdi and Elamati found in the Jhargram sub-division of Midnapore; Black is obtained from Lamp Black, locally made; green (Patarang) from Hara Stone and leaf of the trees (mainly leaf of the Baniyan tree), locally made; blue from reacting copper with lemon-juice or curd. Taking an earthen vessel, they fill half portion with water and then put in it a few pieces of copper and small quantity of lemon juice or curd. This vessel is then put in any cool place (*Pachasal*) under ground for about 15 days. Then the solution is evaporated to get the powder of a blue tint. Red is obtained from the red ochre found in the District of Purulia. They prepare yellow, red and white colours from the salt in the following way."

"They form the solution by rubbing these salts with water on a stone plate. This solution is then taken into a vessel for sedimentation and then filtered. After filtration the solution is taken in a vessel for evaporation. In this way they get the powder of the required colour. Sometimes this powder is then preserved in the form of cakes. Nowadays they purchase many chemical colours from the market. The Chitrakaras use blue vitriol and paste which are made from glutinous seeds of Tamarind tree or *Bel* for the stability of the colours.

BRUSH :— The Chitrakaras use soft and hard painting brushes. This brush is made from the hair from the tail of the mongoose or squirrel, as also the hair of kid, calf sheep, and tied to bamboo, cane and the stalk of a date palm. They made the soft brush according to the following procedure :— At first they collect hairs of mongoose and squirrel and keep them together in a packet of paper. Cutting the feathers at the bottom, these hairs are then pushed in the hole of the feather of kite and the bottom is bound with cotton thread.

CHARACTER OF *PAT* :— The traditional *Patas* are about 25 to 35 ft. in length, two bamboo sticks are fixed on at its two ends for rolling. There is no vacant place in the scroll. It is filled by the organisation of the picture. The figures of the gods and goddesses are much bigger, but those of man and other objects are comparatively small. It should be pointed out that the paintings of gods, goddesses and kings are well-equipped with gorgeous dress, but the dresses of servants and common people are quite simple. The colour of the picture may be fastidious in character, no doubt, but the Chitrakaras use the colour in such a way that the public tastes are satisfied. As for example they depict the colours of king and the devil differently. The various sentiments are expressed differently throughout the scroll".

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"The *Chitrakaras* explain the pictures with the aid of songs, the tales are, no doubt, long, but the picture panels are few. In a *Pat*, there are about 17 to 19 parts of the pictures. The pictorical arrangement in the painted scrolls is in the form of a sequence almost recalling the early days of cinematography".

"Interesting scenes are carefully selected from long mythological legends and illustrated in a self contaned pictorial-drama called *Pala*. e.g. Palas of "*Ramer Banabas, Sita Harana, Ravanabadha, Data Karna*. The source of the story Kamale-Kamini is traced from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Chandimangala and other sources. Firstly in the song they sing the prayer song of Chandimangala. In course of time the Patuas draw the pictures and sang for preaching religion, introduced different subjects among the people, and so the educated as well as uneducated people learnt more about religion and mythology from the painted *Pat* and its accompanying song".

PRESENT OCCUPATION :—"Due to natural change in social evolution about 70% of the Chitrakaras are now unable to paint pictures as their profession. Nowadays they are mostly occupied in making earthen images of gods and goddesses. Generally the village women do not work at the studio, they do not paint on paper or cloth or model images, but have their own 'corner' inside the house, generally in one wing of a broad verandah where they make painted dolls and toys. It is the usual practice for the boys and girls of their families to learn the traditional subjects from their parents and prepare Patas, dolls toys for the village *Mela*."

Mr Amiya Kumar Bandopadhyaya, the noted antiquarian describes the technique of a multicoloured Durga *Pat* said to be one hundred fifty years old worshipped in the *Pub-Para* Chatterji family of Hat Sarendi in Birbhum district near Santiniketan. It is repainted annually according to tradition by a few *patuas* of the village who are eking out existence in great difficulty. Kalipada Sutradhar, the seventy year old artist who faithfully adheres to the one hundred and fifty year old heritage of his forefathers in repainting the old Durga

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Mahisasmardini *Pat* gives the following details about the colours scheme etc. :—

The technique and treatment is extremely simple like other rural crafts. But they produce marvels in the hand of experts, depending only upon a few small earthenware vessels, some large and small brush, a piece of closely woven cloth according to desired size, a split bamboo frame to hold it tight, very fine liquid clay to smear the surface, gum to be prepared from boiled tamarind seed powder and several colours purchased from Bolpur market. Upto the time of Kalipada Babu's grandfather red from the lac of plum trees, blue from the indigo used by washermen, yellow or orange from *Gerimati* (red or yellow ochre), lamp black and many other mixed colours made from the above had been used only. But the method of preparing local indigenous vegetable colours had long been in disuse replaced by chemical colours. On the other hand blue, *Harital*, *Peuri* (yellow prepared from urine of cows) and *Hirakash* (iron sulphate) is still sometimes used.

Initially the dried cloth smeared with clay i.e. the *Pat* for painting the image is tightly fixed on the split bamboo frame. Then the ground of the *Pat* has to be prepared by the application of primary coating (*Astor*) of liquid chalk and the outlines and other drawings to be attempted in Indian red.

Finally, after the images and decorative motifs are applied with traditional colours, the vacant space of the background just under the *Chalachitra* is to be covered with deep blue, according to hoary usage.

Other characteristic colours to be used are yellowish orange for the body of Durga, red for her *Sari* and green for the *Odhni*, red *Sari* and light blue *Odhni* for Lakshmi, body colour of Saraswati should be bright white by applying another layer of liquid chalk, dressed in light blue *Sari* and yellow *Odhni*; Kartik's body should also be yellow, clad in green coat and white *Dhuti* mounted on a multi-coloured peacock in green, yellow and brown; head of Ganesa should be white, body orange, *Dhoti* white accompanied by a green *Asura* clad in red *Dhoti* and a lion partly in yellow and brown.[1]

REFERENCES

1. Amiya Kumar Bandopadhyaya— "Chitrita Pate Durga Puja" (worship of Durga image in painted. Pat) in Bengali, Paribartan, Durga Puja number 1387 B.S., Calcutta, pp. 80-81.

CONCLUSION

We have had a glimpse of remarkable specimens of the so-called folk art of India, carrying on the ageless tradition of Indian painting, ancient and mediaeval expressed in a language evolved through centuries past, yet adapting itself and responding to external influence but at the same time, what is most important, retaining its essential Indian characteristics. The art of ageless India had evolved on novel aesthetic formula which neither relied or verisimilitude of the Greeks and Romans nor darted to the other extreme viz. abstract fantasy of modern art. From the earliest days it manifested itself very successfully, in evolving a symbolic language consequent upon a happy in teraction of observation and imagination. Throughout the ages, again, Indian artist has successfully met the challenge of foreign invasion, political turmoil and strike, change of cultural pattern, but openly accepted whatever the foreigner had to give, synthesised it and always produced a style with a predominant Indian flavour. Thar is true of the Hellenistic period, Islamic period and the British period in her history. In the middle of the 20th Century, unfortunately however, there is a marked tendency to cut adrift from our moorings, forget our heritage and express ourselves completely in strange and fanciful ways which is nothing but a reflex of our moral and spiritual degradation inspite of the hard earned political freedom. If the Indian artist of to-day gives a good-bye to the fundamental values of Indian art—a direct product of thousands of years of Indian tradition and experience, forget his great power of assimilation and synthesis, his inherent strength and blindly goes in for mannerisms and technique which have scarcely any connection with the people, soil and environment, then I am afraid there is every danger that Indian culture and civilization will vanish in no time and follow the path of Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome and a host of other civilizations which have faded into the pages of history.

APPENDIX A

KALIGHAT SCHOOL OF PAINTING—IS IT REALLY DEAD ?

(Based on a recent interview by the statesman, Calcutta)

Sirish Pal sits on a wooden bench surrounded by a sur-realist montage of half-finished clay goddesses. "*Pata*" Paintings, he asks, "Who does not painting now ? Its all gone. Finished. However, he admits that he does have some paintings. Muttering to himself, he disappears into the murky depths of his ramshackle workshop located in the Patuapara area of Kalighat. The incomplete images with which the workshop is crowded seem to wait patiently for his return, as though they are used to his minor lapses and know that ultimately he must come back to them. He returns with an armload of paintings done on thick, handmade paper and wrapped in a scrap of thin white cloth. Almost reluctantly he uncovers the paintings and hands them over one by one in a young helper who lays them out on a chatal spread on the earthen floor.

The paintings, each about 15 inches by 12, seem to have random themes, like fragments of a half-forgotten dream. Gods and goddesses, a cat eating a prawn, a woman preparing a *pan*, or playing a violin, a Babu of a bygone age resolent in pleated dhoti and an air of indolent assurance; But despite the diversity of their themes, the paintings have a markedly common style. Bold, bright colours and strong, simple yet fluent lines.

As the paintings are spread out, covering the mat with colour, the painter talks about an art that to-day is not dying but already dead, and capable now of only brief and occassional reincarnation. He talks desultorily, in snatches as vivid as his paintings. As he talks he squints at the shabby street, as though seeing it not as it is now but as it was when he was a young man.

"Yes, Patuapara was the centre of *Pat* painting. This is where it started, Oh, a long time ago. How long ? Say a hundred, two hundred years ago. All the pilgrims who came to worship at Kalighat temple, each one of them would buy a *Pat* painting for two pice. Two pice was quite a lot of money in those days. It was something to see them. Hundreds of people, men, women and children from the villages, carrying garlands and fruits. And the shops along the street, all full, selling paintings and little mud toys for the children. But the paintings have all gone now, no one does them any more though they still call this place Patuapara."

Religious Decoration

The origins of *Pat* painting, which has influenced modern Indian artists such as Jamini Roy and for which Kalighat was once famous, can be traced back to religious decoration. Artists painted mythological figures on the flat "*Pat*" or border, made of mud or cloth, that went around the traditional *Puja* images. Gradually artists began to use not themes and styles for individual paintings which proved very popular, not only as icons for pilgrims but also with children who were attracted by the bright colours and the clear, simple illustrations. *Pat* painting, retained its graphic, styled form added considerably to its content by reflecting the age and its social norms. In those days there were no community *Pujas* and each house would have its own image, humble or elaborate. Wealthy, established families would summon the artisans to their homes to make the 'dolls and the artists, quick to pick up new themes, began to incorporate everyday domestic and social motifs in their paintings. The result was a unique folk art, traditional yet urban, vigorous though reflecting the idiogynerasies of a culture already decadent at the time. The "Babu Culture" as it is sometimes called flourished briefly but exquisitely in Calcutta like an exotic hot-house plant at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present one. Like the irate bloom it was, that milieu soon withered and died. But for years, Pot painting remained as its graphic epitaph. The hybrid and baroque interplay of East and West that was the theme of "Babu Culture" was unconsciously reflected by not artists long after it had made its exit from the social stage. Young artists, trained by fathers and uncles in the family craft, continued to portray scenes they had never seen for themselves, and were influenced by cultural undercurrents they had never experienced. In the ghostly gallery of art, figures from traditional Hindu mythology often appear in the borrowed robes of the Hellenic and Itallianesgue statutes and paintings that adorned the "*Baithakshanas* of a forgotten era. A winged *apsara* looks suspiciously like Diana in a short chiton-like garment and Kartik riding his peacock has the neatly curled moustache and pomaded hairstyle of a dandyed young zamindar. Many typical potyed paintings depict tableuax from a vanished age of leisure.

"Printing," says Sirish Pal emphatically, "That's what finished us. When people began to get cheaply printed machine-made calenders and pictures to hang on for our paintings. So one by one all the *Pat* painters turned to other trades. Most of us were making clay images and toys before, so we carried on with these. I only make images now. It's profitable." But the ex-painter has not entirely abandóned his first calling. He has a stock of painting and sometimes still paints. "For foreigners mainly", he says, "Foreigners like our paintings very much, are prepared to pay good prices for them. Recently I sold some to an American, Ten Rupees each. Perhaps I could have got more but I didn't ask." He also paints for the occasional exhibition. "Last month there was one in Burnpur. I showed my paintings there. See, they gave me a certificate." He proudly produces the paper, carefully tucked away among the paintings.

Sirish Pal admits that he uses 'Bazar' colours for the few paintings he does now. "Yes, of course we used to make our own colours before. All *Pat* painters did. But things have changed. It takes so much time, and there are so many other things to do. He confesses that he still has yearnings to return to painting. "I would like to. But it would have to be something new, in keeping with the times. People don't want gods and goddesses so much any more. I want to paint different things, things that will interest :people to-day.

But where is the time ?" He is silent for a moment and then as though he has suddenly remembered an appointment for which he is already late, he bundles up the paintings and hurries inside his workshop and the waiting images.

A few years down the street and around a corner Sirish Pal's uncle, 82-year-old Birendranath Chitrakar, a tiny, animated figure among handless and limbless clay statute, clucks, "Pal ?" No. that's not my name. My name is *Chitrakar*, I am an artist. My family are always been artists. He puts down a small, clay figure of Jagannath on which he has been working. "No one buys paintings any more. So now I make "*murtis*" and toys. But "I am still an artist, a *Chitrakar*. Let these young fellows call themselves what they will." He explains that Viswakarma, the God of Work, had nine sons from whom have descended the nine types of craftsmen. Including the artist, the goldsmith, the garland-maker and the potter. He talks of his genealogy surrounded by the familiar deities he creates out of clay for a living.

No "Bazar Colours"

Yes, he is the oldest *Pai* painter alive in Patuapara. Of course he used to make his own colours. He would never paint with "bazar" colours. "All these paint-makers with their big factories. Who do you think they learnt from first ? From us. We had seven colours we could get from stones and earth and plants. By mixing these we got as many colours as we wanted. Yellow came from *pewri* stone or *harital.* You rubbed the stone and rubbed it for two three hours, and you would get a little colour, enough for one painting perhaps. We got green from leaves and grass and black from the soot of oil lamps. We got red from *Sindur* and blue from the English indigo plantations. To make gold colour we would mix one part of yellow with one and half parts of chalk and a little mix red. I still have some *harital* yellow. Here I'll show you". From a battered biscuit-tin he removes a crumpled packet, the paper as wrinkled as his fingers. The bright colour comes to light bringing a sparkle to his eyes. Then his old hands fold up the packet, his eyes dim. "They have all gone now. All the painters of my time. We were famous once. Now they still have this painting in Midnapur, but there is nothing here. We have *murtis* and toys, but other places have them as well. No one else had the painting we had and now it's finished. "He puts away the rusty tin box and his old memories."

The main street that runs through Patuapara is freshly tarred and new buildings crowd the small workshops full of clay idols. A youngman sits at the doorway of a clay modeller's shop, packing mud onto a skeleton straw figure. *Pat* paintings he has never done any. The people we should see are Sirish Pal and his old uncle Barendranath. They are about the only two left.

APPENDIX B

KALIGHAT SCHOOL OF PAINTING A CONTEMPORARY ASSESSMENT

W.G. Archer in his famous treatise on "Kalighat Paintings", London, 1971, asserted. "In 1920 almost all the descendants of the original artists had ceased to paint and by 1930 the school had ended." During the course of intensive survey of the Kalighat area a southern suburb of Metropolitan Calcutta, we have come to the conclusion that the Kalighat school had not yet entirely vanished as opined by Archer. Some four coloured examples of the Kalighat style though decadent, painted on order by Sri Srish Chandra Chitrakar have been acquired by me in 1978 during the Documentation Work of the Crafts Museum. There are several others surviving painters of the School though most of them have foresaken painting in favour of more profitable and popular images making in clay such as Durga, Kali, Saraswati etc. during festivals.

"Sirish Chandra Chitrakar perhaps the best of the lot, lives in a rectangular tin shed which is separated into two compartments by means of brick built partition, that serves as his living room, bed room, kitchen and studio, covered by a machan which is used as the store and additional space for retiring. Furniture consist of just a stool and a bench, smeared with clay stains. Srish Chandra was born in Akabpur village, Sutahata Thana, district Midnapore in 1327 B.S. Accompanied by his father Rajani Chitrakar came to live in Kalighat was the only market for *Pat* paintings who visited the Kali temple at the spot were the main buyers of the Pat corresponding to the present day pilgrim buyers of Jagannatha *Pats* of Puri priced only two paise each. Local people also bought some of the *Pats*. Sale was rather brisk otherwise how could the painters managed to maintain their families ? During season time the artists used to make dolls and also images during or just before the festivals for which temporary sheds used to be set up as in modern days. For the rest of the time the artists used to return to their original homes across the Ganga. Primarily Sirish Chandra Chitrakar learnt all the crafts from his late father Rajani Chitrakar who won the Rastrapati Medal in 1965 for his Balaram *Pat*, uncle Khagendranath and Harijiban Pal, a clay modeller of Krishnanagore who migrated from Kumartooli (another centre of image makers in northernmost part of Calcutta), to Kalighat in extreme south. He revealed critics first turned their attention after W.G. Archer visited Kalighat in 1932 and published his Bazar Painting of Calcutta in 1953."

According to him there are scarcely any buyers of Arts now-a-days. Annually only 5 or 6 specimens are sold. For they cannot sold for less than ten rupees each to cover cost of materials and labour. Kalighat pilgrims now prefer to buy framed oriented pictures of "*Ma Kali*" or Sai Baba and return home with a bottle of sacred Ganga water, who could by a *Pat* worth ten rupees when a calenderlike a picture where price varies from eight annas to one rupee is available, of course the citizens of Calcutta and other towns do not now favour painted *Pats* at all. Several years ago Sirish Babu took with him several Pats painted on paper to the Banga Sanskriti Sammelan at Burnpur. Except some 2 to 3 examples purchased by the authorities general public was completely, apathetic. Referring to the *Manpatra* awarded by the organisers he sarcastically remarked –"Can it fill my stomach ?" Although some aristocrat people even from Madras still come to purchase the pats, their number is quite meagre. Even now he has not stopped painting although image making is the principal mode of living."

"Through the efforts of late Sudhangsu Kumar Roy, several years ago a *Pat* school was established at Kalighat under the auspices of the government, directed by Srish Babu's father Rajani Chitrakar. But it was closed down after the death of Rajani Kanta. At one time the Central Government proposed to employ Sirish Babu on a salary of Rs. 300.00 to train 4 to 6 students each with a monthly stipend of Rs. 60.00 Unfortunately the proposal did not materialise as there was no market for *Pat*. According to Srish Babu, *Pat* may again become popular if the modern society is illustrated in the revised *Pat* (as done by the Midnapur Patus now). Because *Pats* reflecting the customs and manners current in bygone days fail to attract people here."

"It is a matter of gratification that Srish Babu is firmly determined to revive the art of *Pat* painting. He is *confident that the way in which the Madhubani paintings are preserved and popularised, the Kalighat school also may be rescuciated by following the same method.* He wants to paint on better paper or cloth and have them framed properly. He is also thinking of working on canvasses. But the *Pats* should mirror contemporary life—a new series of the modern world. He sadly laments that interior decoration of the new prestigious airport hotel at Dum Dum has included some Kalighat *Pats*—but no collection from Kalighat *Pat* to decorate their drawing rooms. This will certainly serve to encourage the dying artists. Will the Government try to break the popular apathy by taking proper steps and encourage the living surviving artists to stem the rott ?" It may be mentioned here that four colour examples in the old style have been purchased quite recently for a nominal sum—(1) a lady busy with preparing *Pan* (2) a lady playing on violin (3) Siva playing on *Vina* (4) Man fighting with tiger which is inferior than the same painted years ago (fig. 122). The statesman, Calcutta.

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3. Mithuna, Radha Krisna (?), Puri, Orissa, C. 17th Century A.D. Author's Collection, Calcutta.

4. Mithuna, Radha Krisna (?), Puri, Orissa, C. 17th Century, A.D.
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6. Kandarpa-Rati, Ganjam, Orissa, C. 18th Century A.D. Author's Collection, Calcutta.

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8. Fight between, Bali and Ravana, Ramacharita Manasa Manuscript, Mahishadal, Midnapur West Bengal, 1972-1975-A.D. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

9. Ramayana *Pāt*, Bankura, West Bengal, Early 18th Century A.D. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

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22. Suitors hurrying to *Svayambara Sabha*, Palmleaf Manuscript of Chitralekha Kavya, Orissa, C. 16th Century A.D. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

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56. Krisna, Palmleaf Manuscript of Gita Govinda, 19th Century A.D. (?). Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

57. Kanchi Kaveri Pat, Cloth, Contemporary Puri, Orissa. Author's Collection.

58. Visnu Purana *Pata*, Wooden Manuscript Cover, Dated 1499 A.D. (Shakabda 1421), Visnupur, Bankura, West Bengal.

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64. *Rasalila*, Wooden Manuscript Cover, Assam (Kamarupa) (?) C. 17th Century A.D. Courtesy Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Calcutta.

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89. *Kamale Kamini Pat*, Raja Salivahana, Paper, Kulgachhia, Dt. Howrah, West Bengal, Early 19th Century A.D. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art Calcutta University.

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121. Radha Krishna, Paper, Kalighat *Pat*, Calcutta Contemporary (1977). Author's Collection.

122. Hunter & Tiger, Paper, Kalighat *Pat*, (1975), Contemporary Crafts Museum, New Delhi.

123. Lakshmi, Paper, Coloured Kalighat *Pat*, Calcutta, Contemporary (1945). Author's Collection, now in National Museum, New Delhi.

124. Krisna-Yasoda, Paper, Coloured Kalighat *Pat*, Calcutta Contemporary. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

125. Mother and Child, Paper, Painted by Jamini Roy, Calcutta, Contemporary. Private Collection.

126. Part of *Chalachitra* showing Siva and Parvati in Mt. Kailash Paper, Krishagore, Dt. Nadia, West Bengal, Contemporary. (1945), Author's Collection.

127. Part of *Chalachitra* showing Durga fighting with the Asuras, Paper, Krishagore, Dt. Nadia, West Bengal, Contemporary (1945), Author's Collection.

128. *Paralukik Pat* showing Village Elder, Paper, Binpur Dt. Midnapur, Contemporary (1940). Author's Collection.

129. *Paralaukik Pat*, A man and a woman, Paper, Murunica Dt. Midnapur, West Bengal, Contemporary, Author's Collection.

130. *Paralaukik Pat*, A Vaisnavi, Paper, Murunia, Dt. Midnapur, West Bengal, Contemporary. Author's Collection.

131. *Jadu Pat*, Tiger God (Satya Pir ?), Paper, Dumka, Santhal Parganas, Bihar, Contemporary. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

132. *Jadu Pat*, Vastraharan Krisnalila Pat, Paper, Bharatpur, Bankura, W. Bengal. Contemporary. Courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.

133. *Jadu Pat*, Gopis *Krisnalila Pat*, Paper, Bharatpur, Bankura, West Bengal, Contemporary. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

134. *Jadu, Pat*, Gopis, Paper, Dumka, Santhal Paraganas Bihar, West Bengal, Contemporary. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

135. Santhal Genesis *Pat*, Paper. Binpur Dt. Midnapur, West Bengal, 19th Century. Courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.

136. *Jadu Pat*, Satya Pir (?), Paper, Dumka, Santhal Parganas, Bihar 19th Century. Courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.

137. Ganjifa, *Subalaya* showing Rama and Lakshmana Cloth, Puri, Orissa, Early 20th Century. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

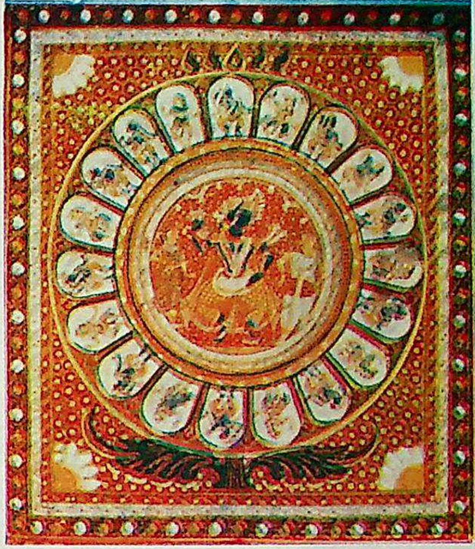
138. Lakshmi *Sara*, showing Mahisasuramardini, Krisnalila and Lakshmi Earthenware, Faridpur, Bangladesh, 1st half of 20th Century. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

139. Lakshmi *Sara* showing Mahisamardini and Lakshmi Earthenware, Bangladesh migrants Kasba, Calcutta, Contemporary (1978). Author's Collection.

140. Manasa *Ghat*, Earthenware, Faridpur, Bangladesh, 1st half of 20th Century. Courtesy Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University.

141. Manasa *Ghat*, Earthenware, Barisal migrant, Madhyamgram 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Contemporary (1970). Author's Collection.

142. *Chitrakara*, at work, Puri, Orissa. Contemporary, (after Krasa).



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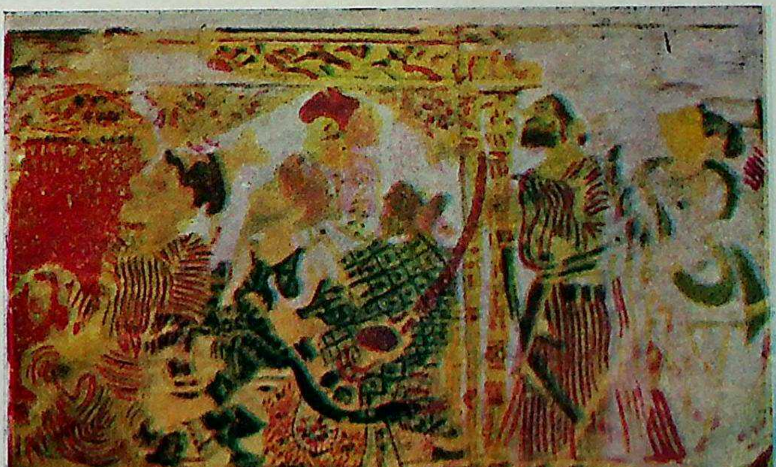

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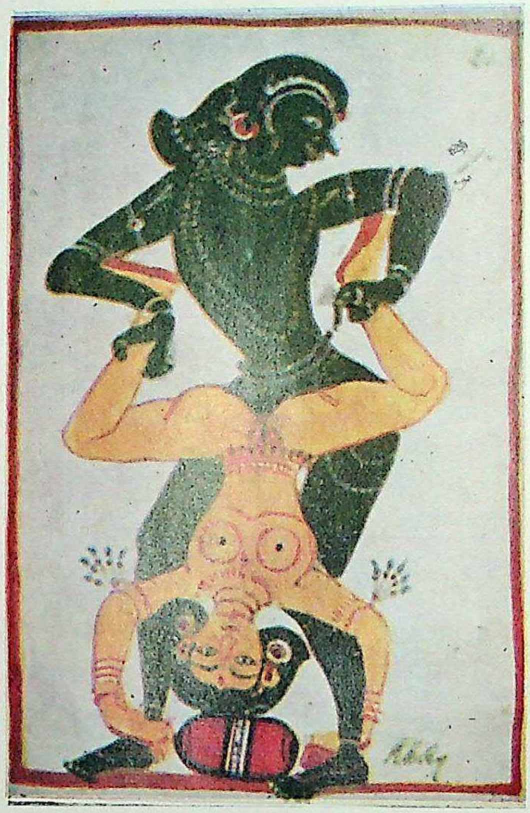

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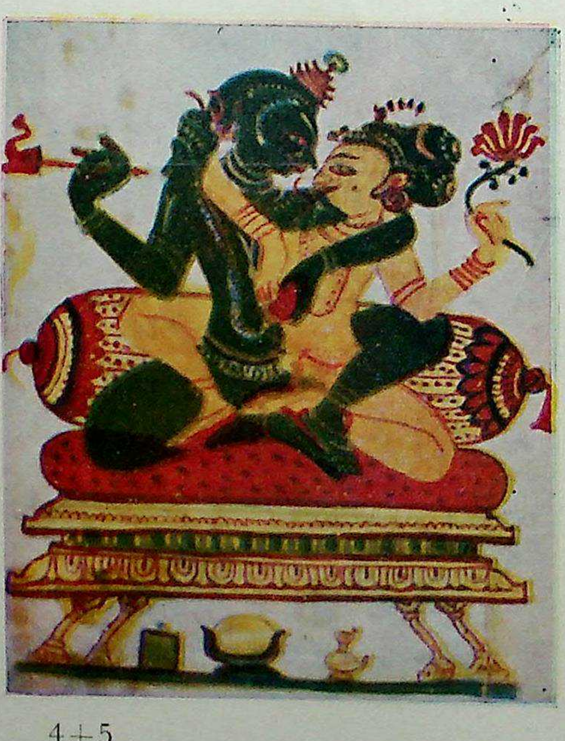

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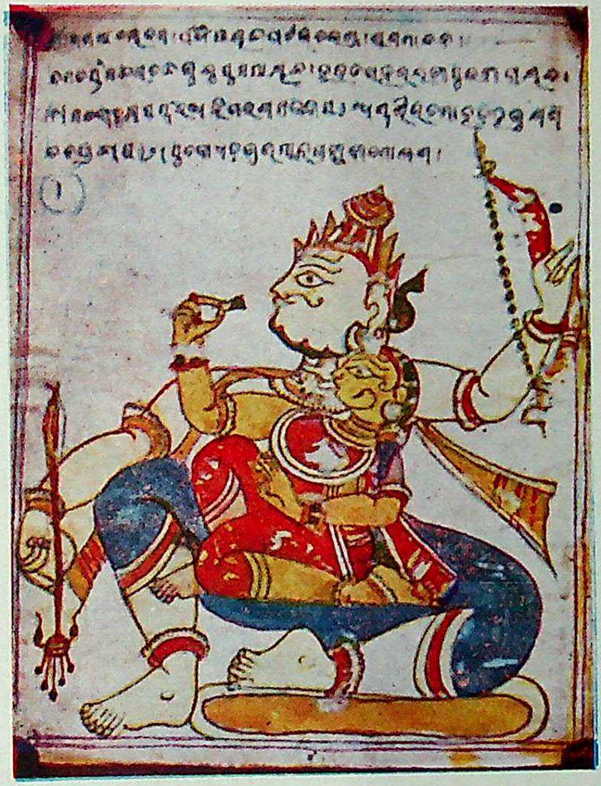

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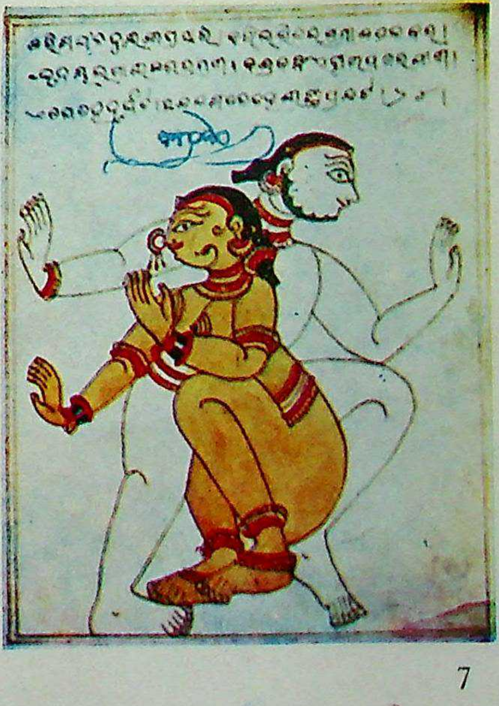

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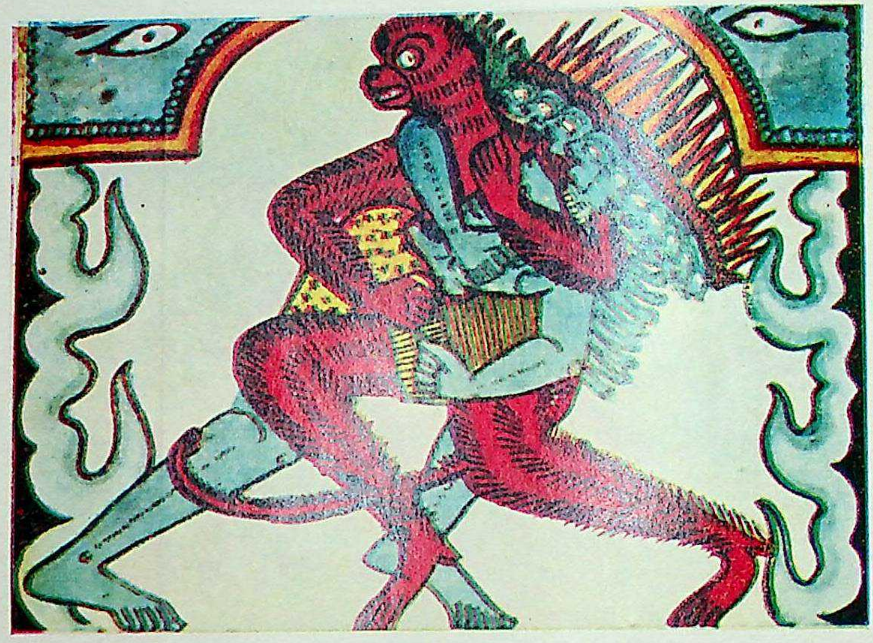

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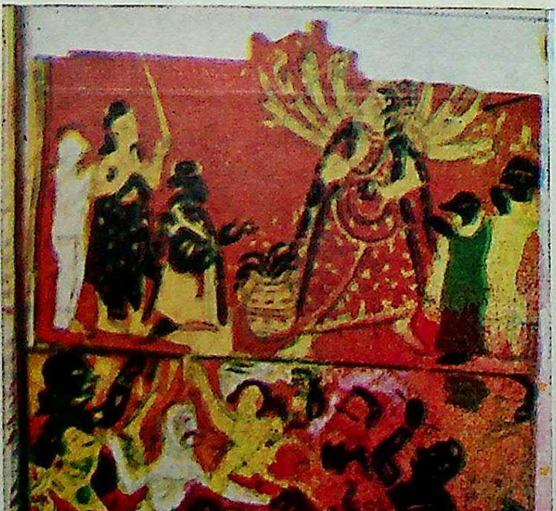

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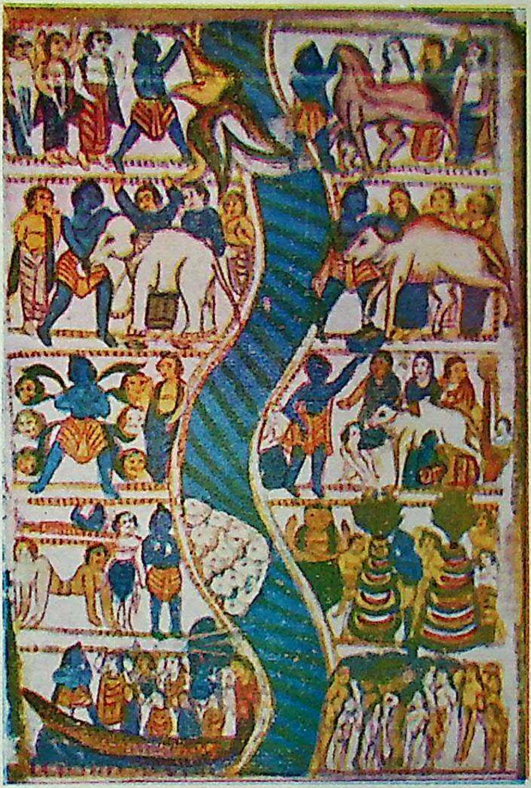

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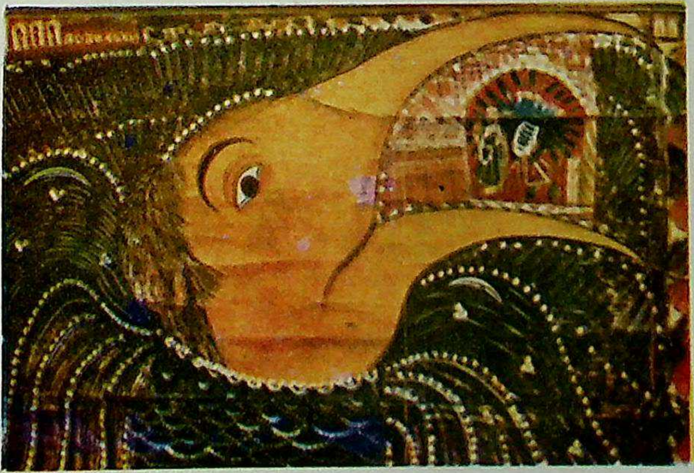

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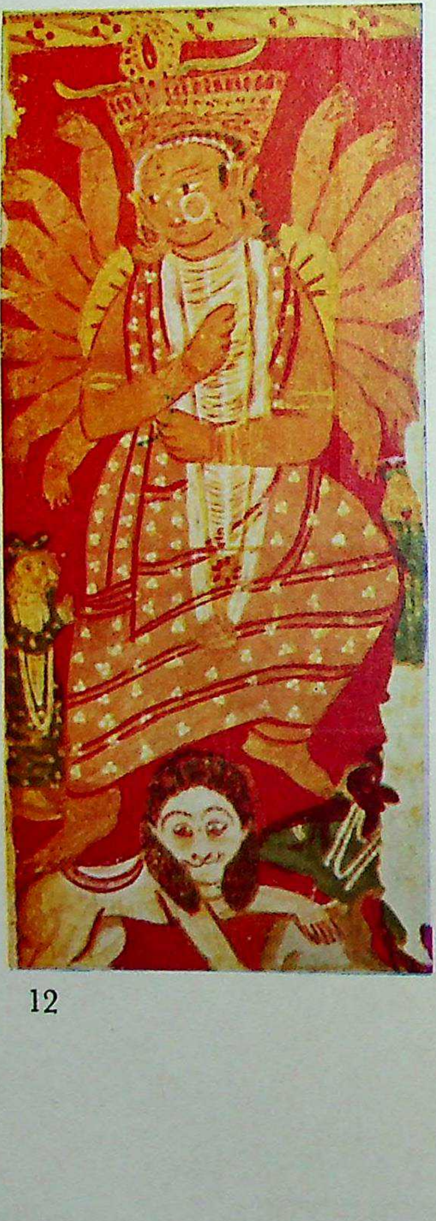

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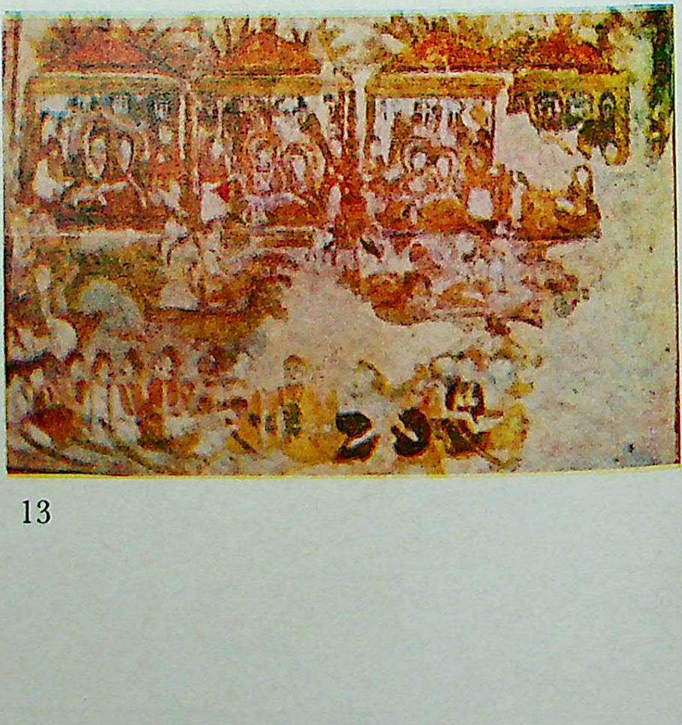

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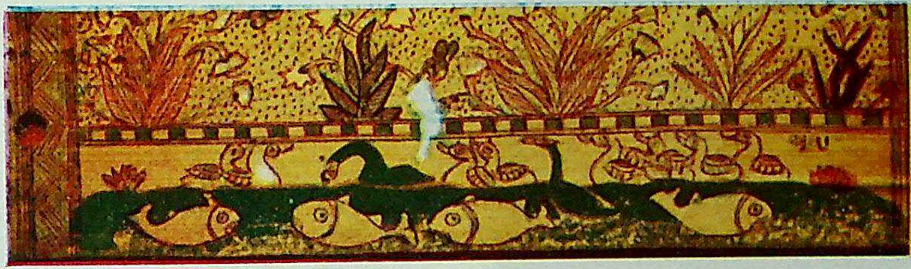

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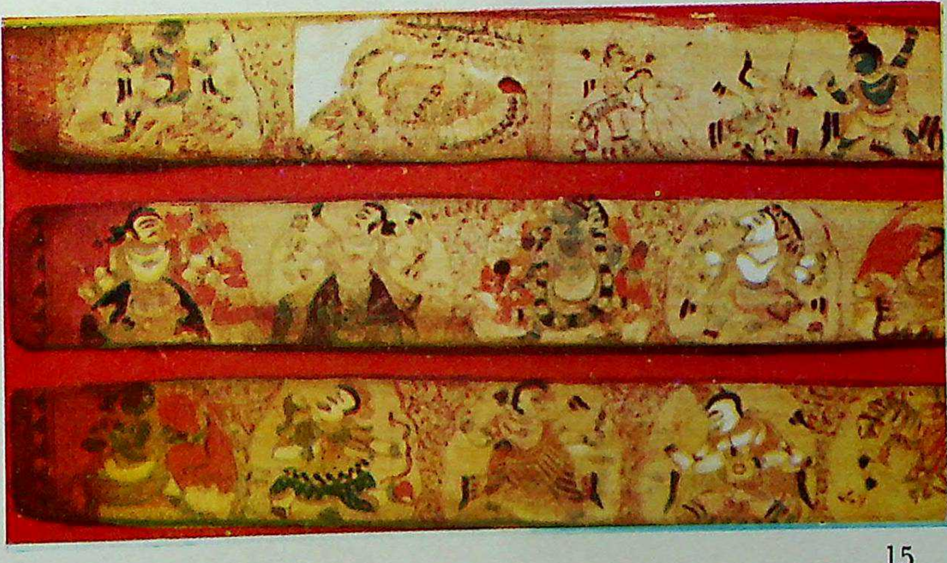

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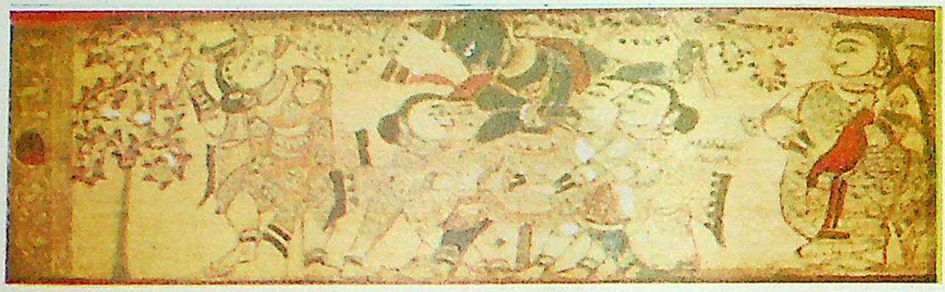

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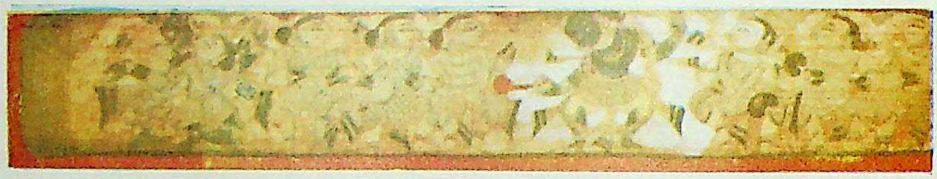

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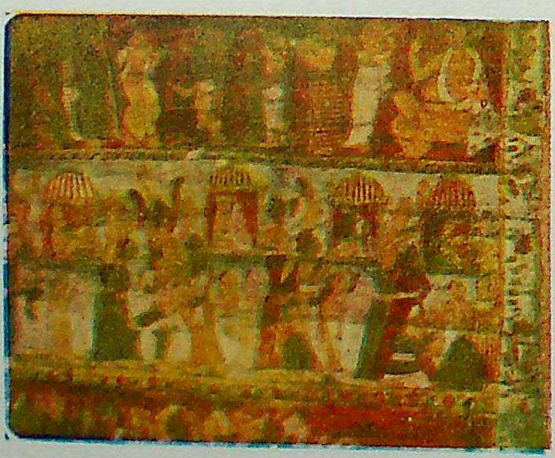

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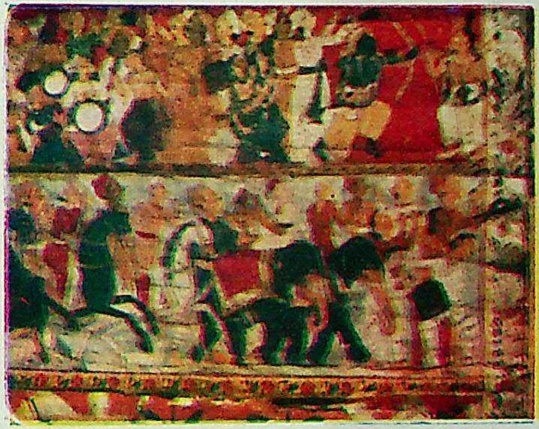

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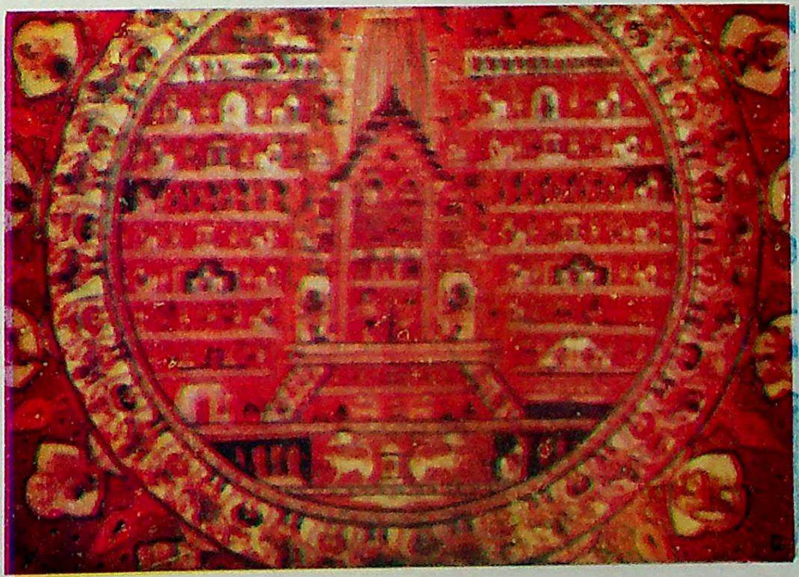

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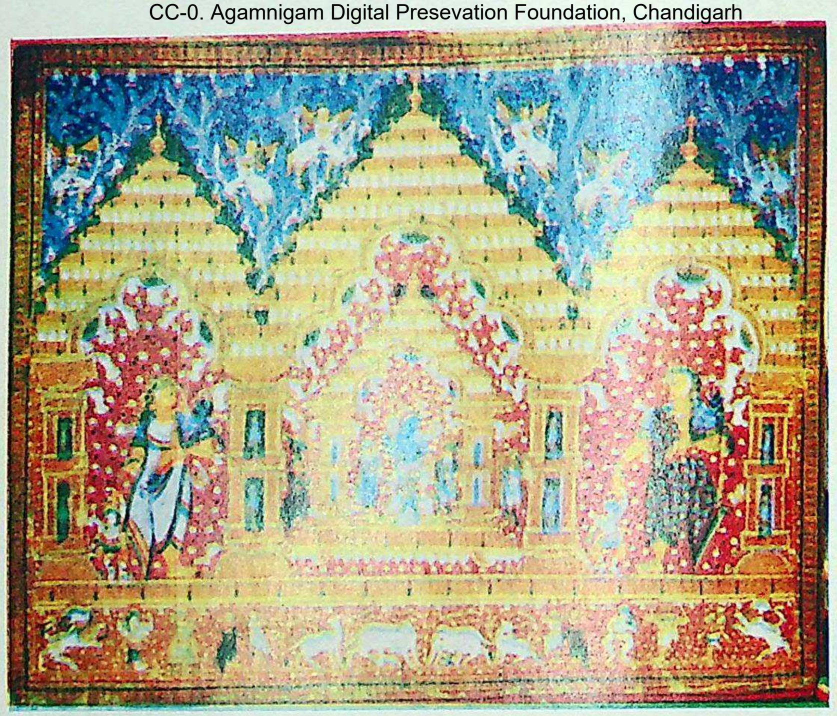

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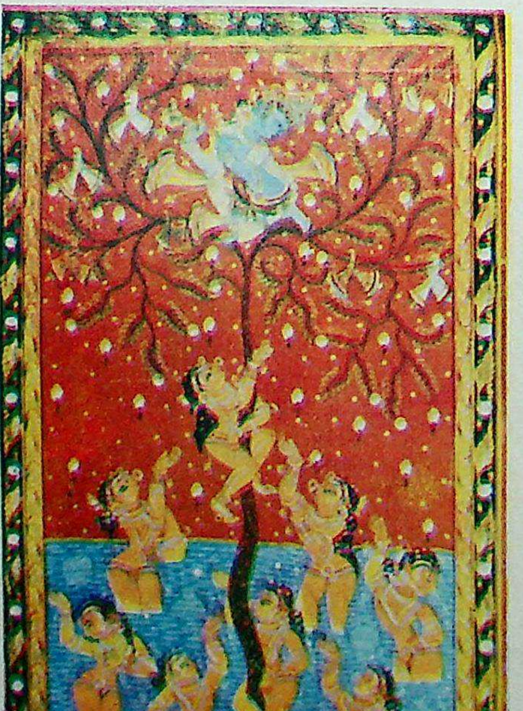

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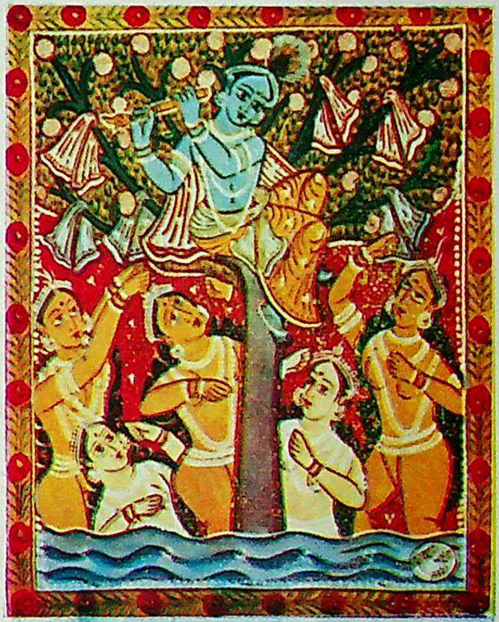

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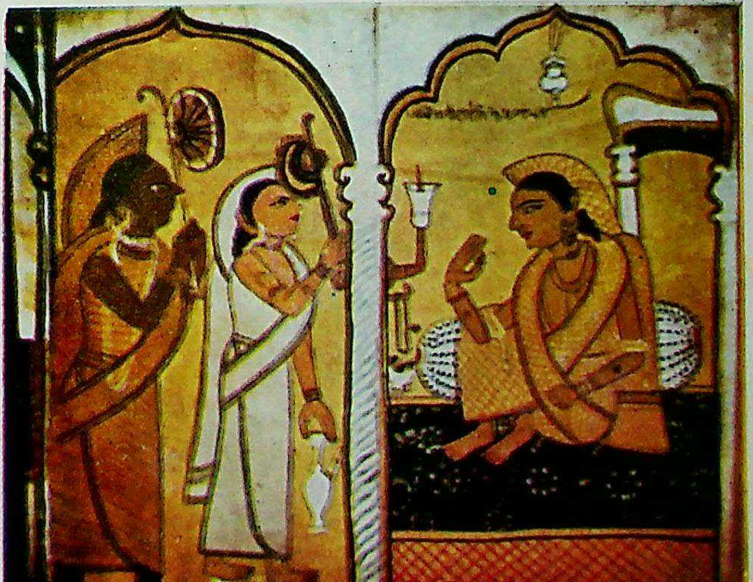

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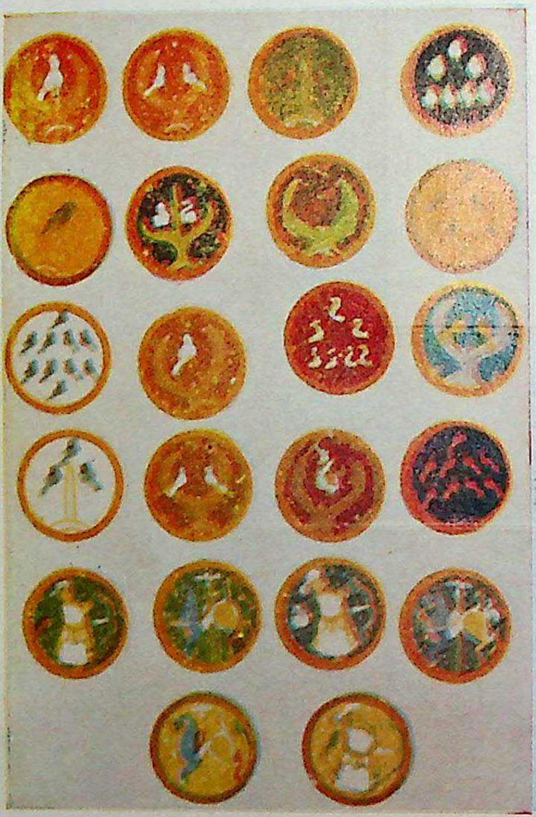

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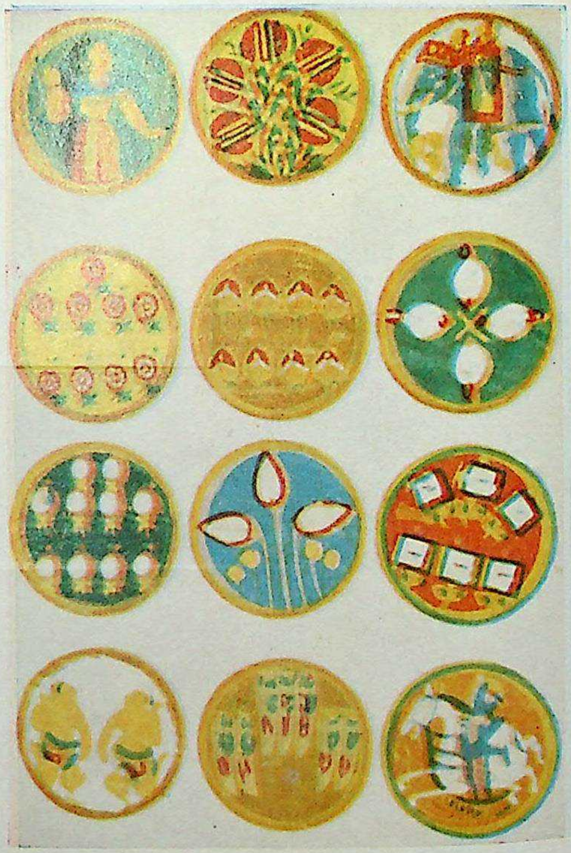

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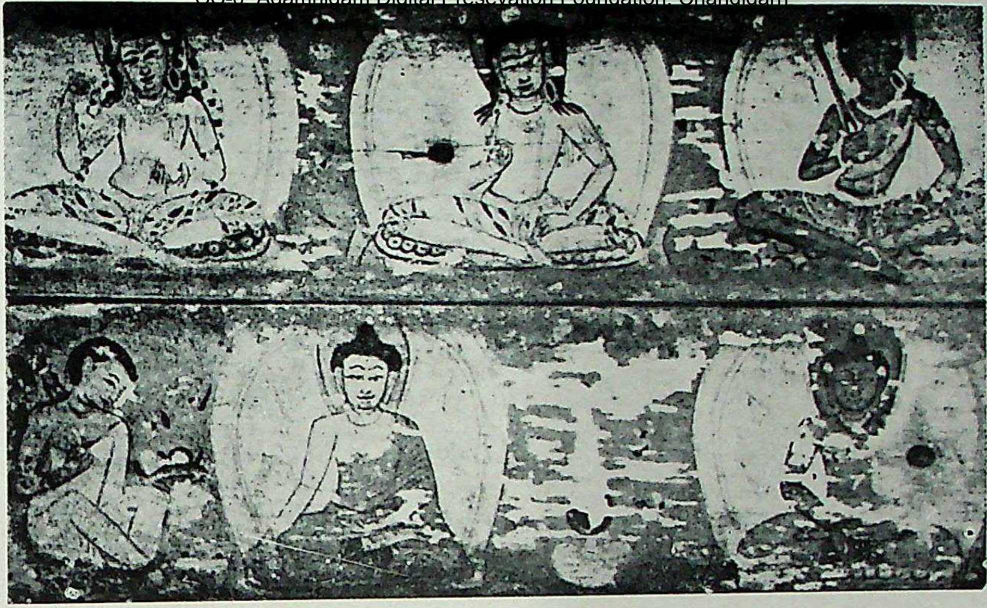

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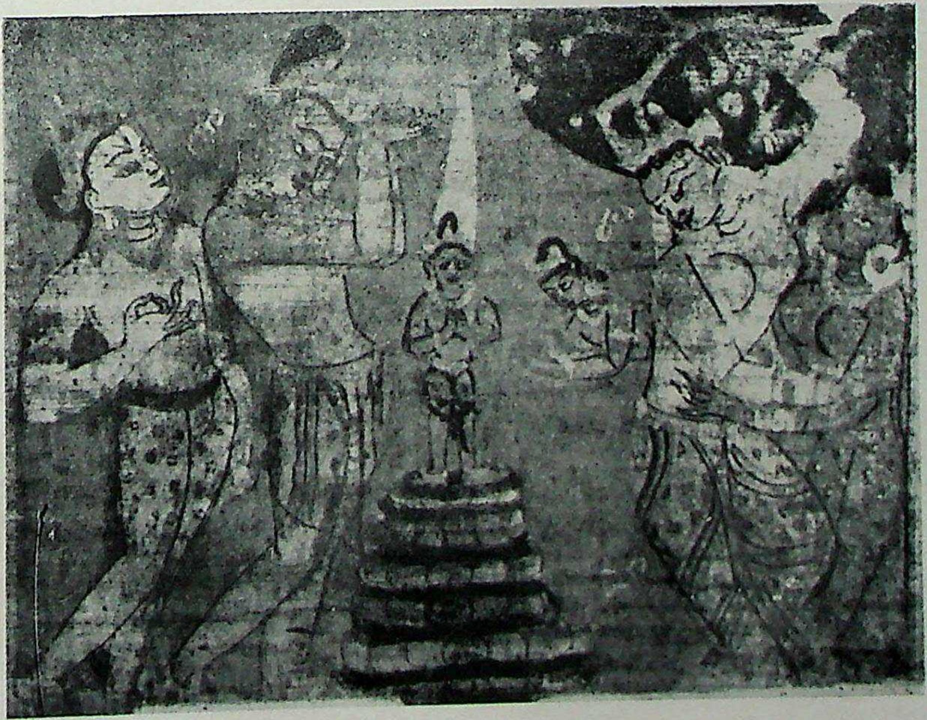

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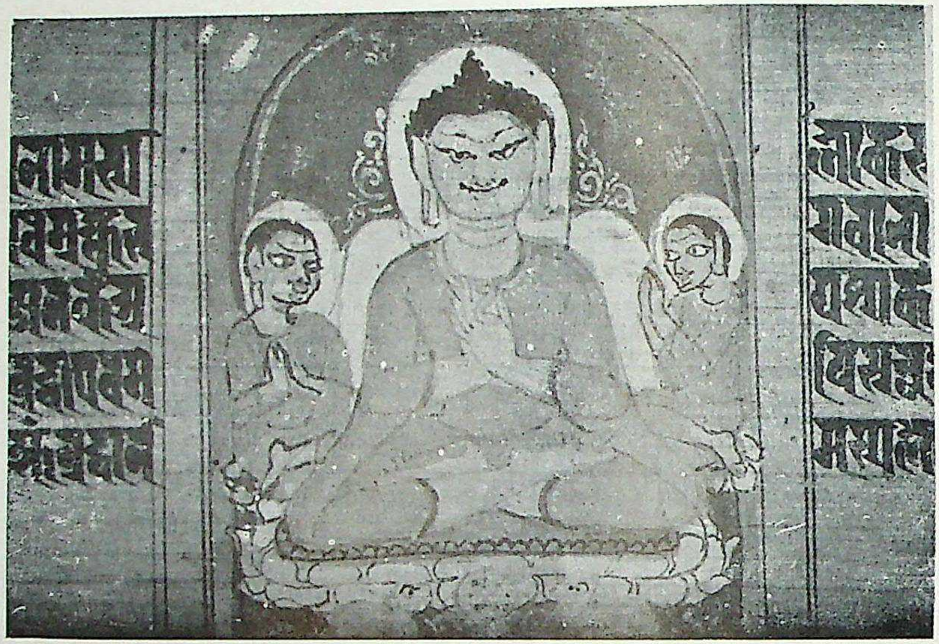

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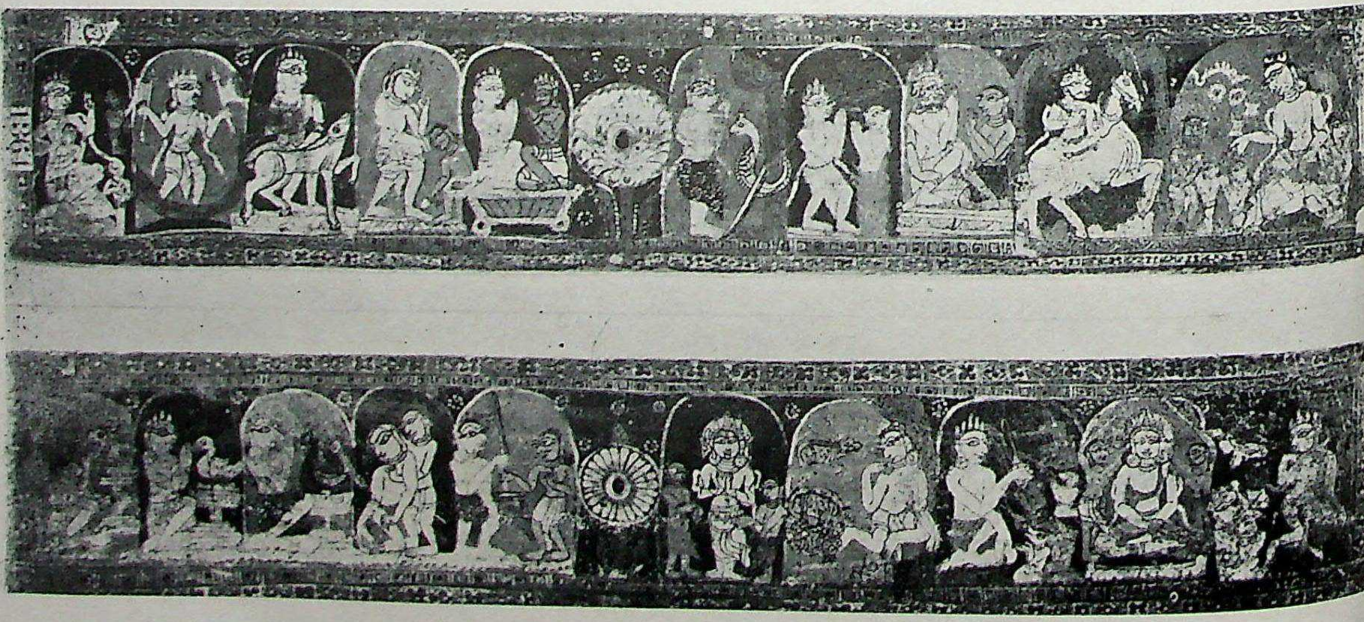

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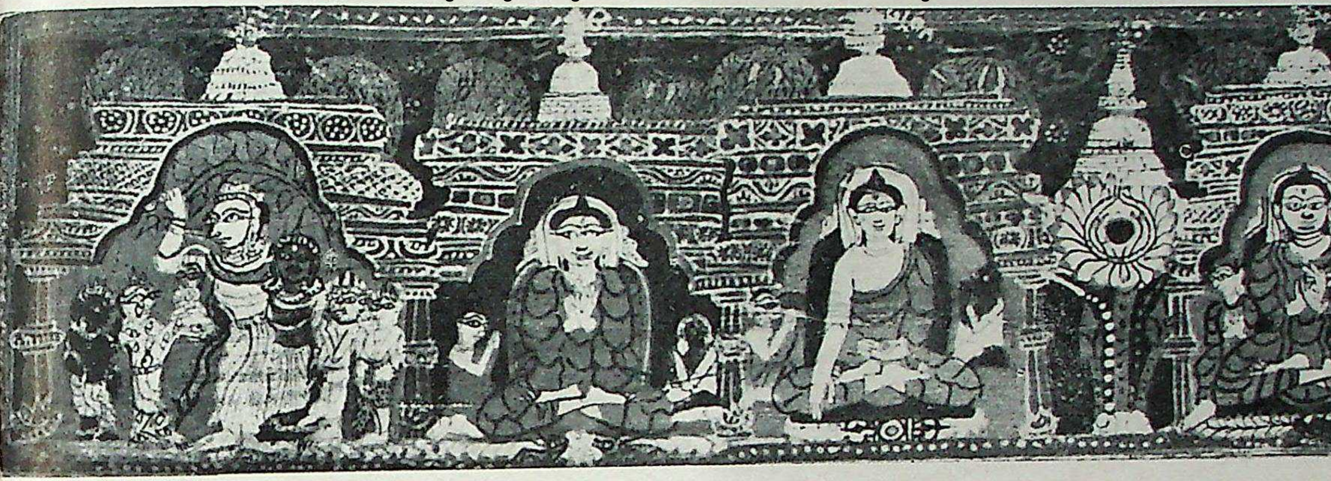

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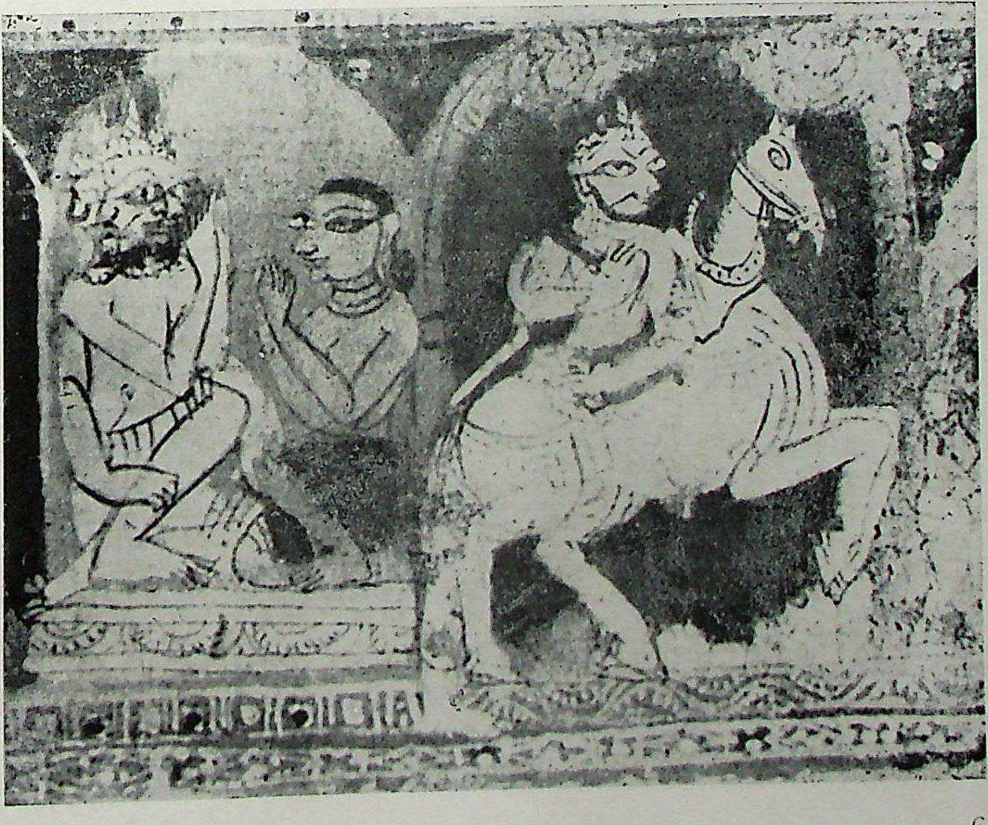

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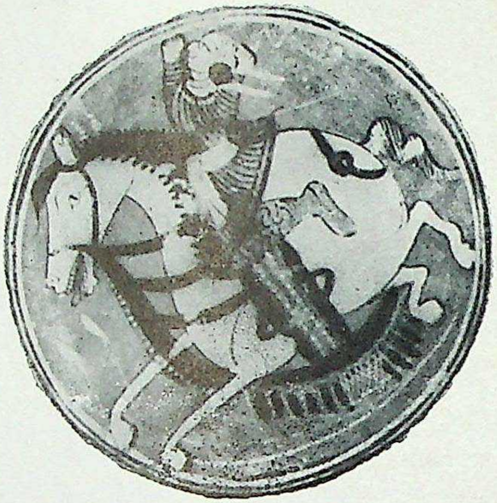

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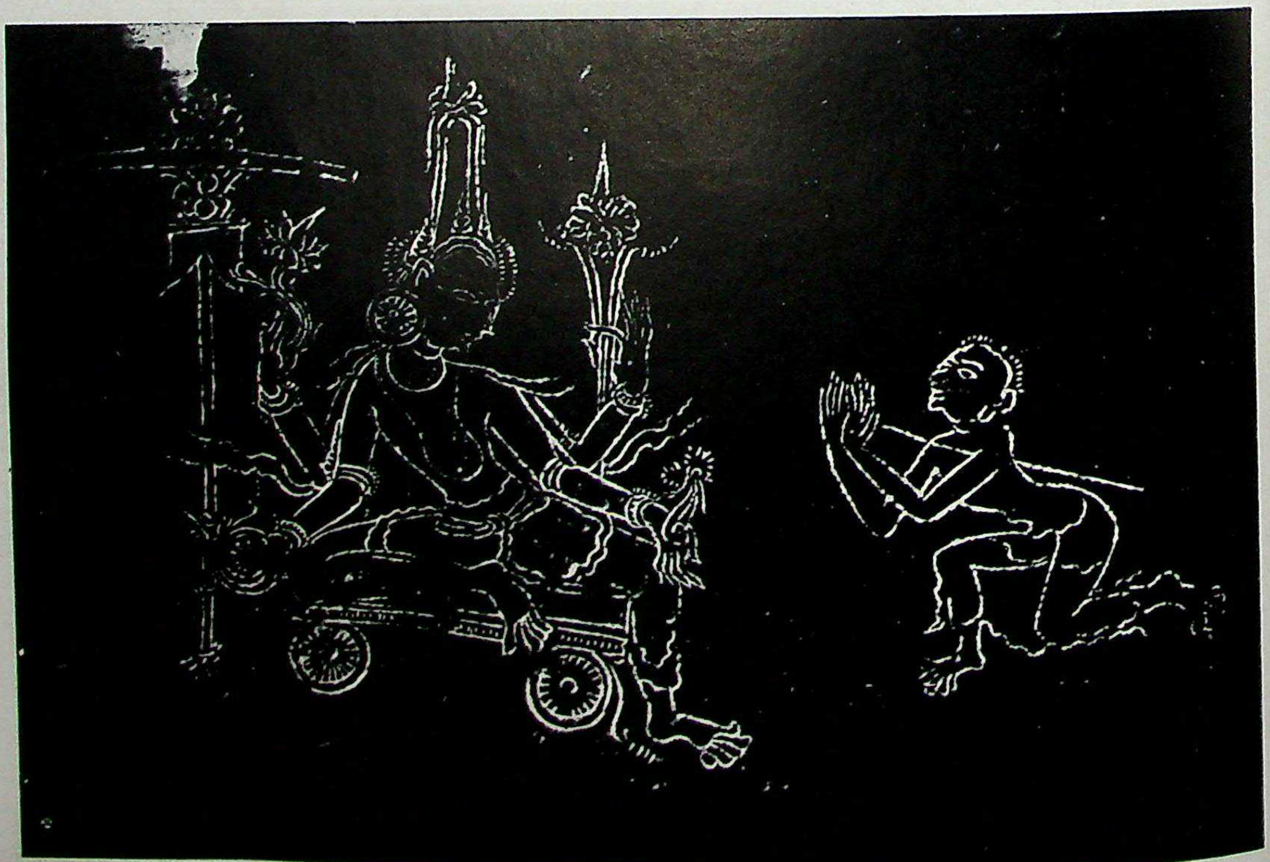

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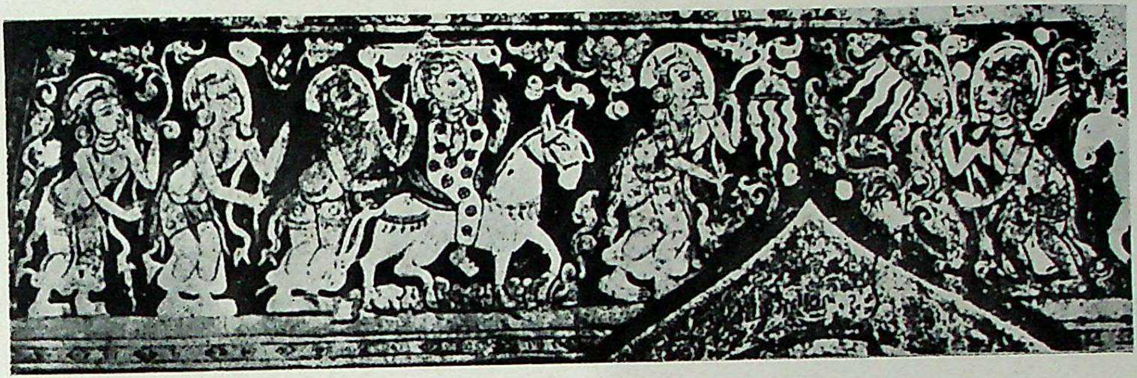

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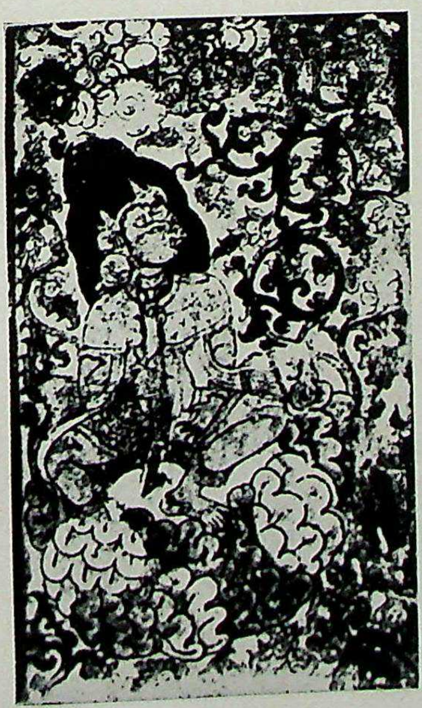

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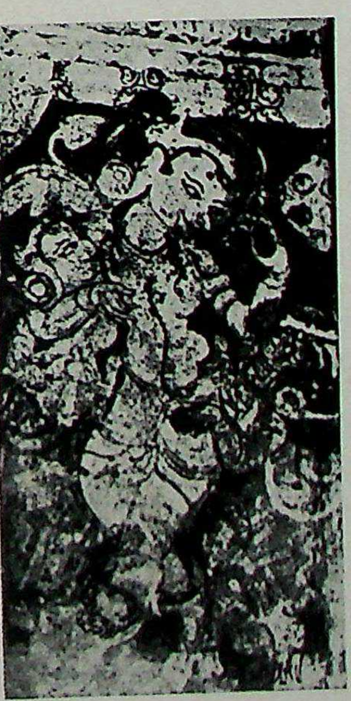

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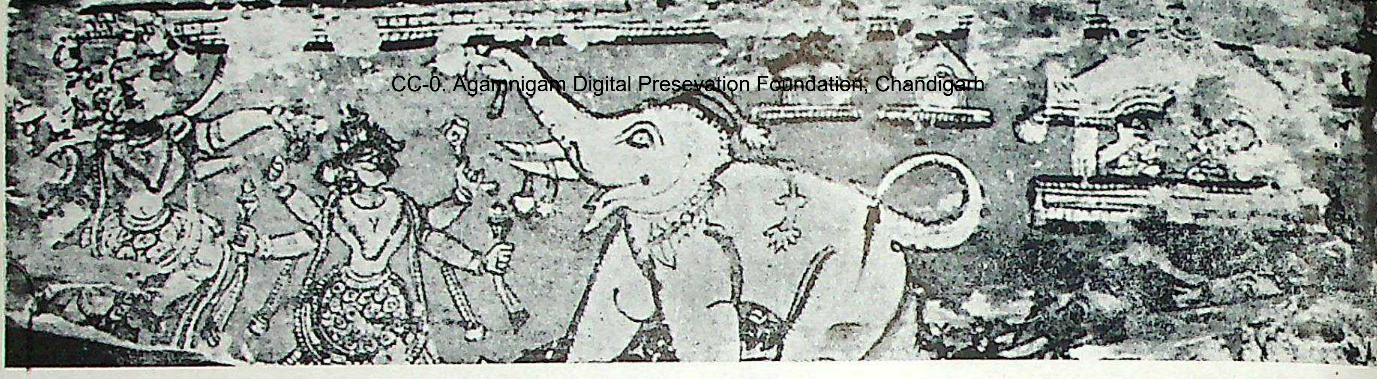

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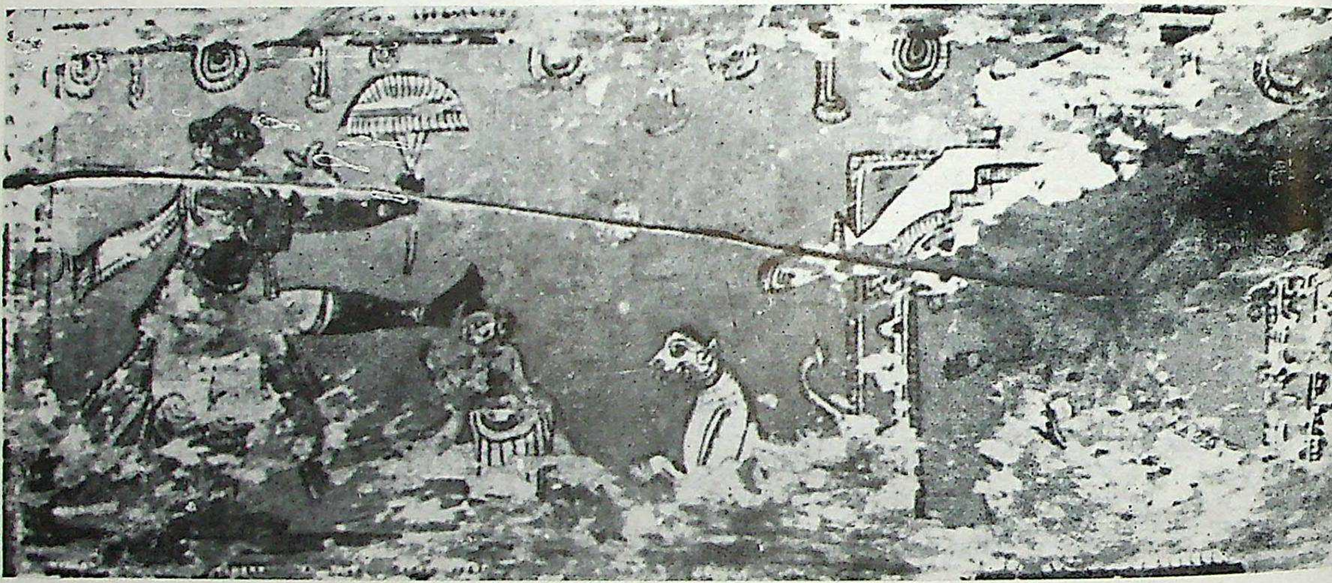

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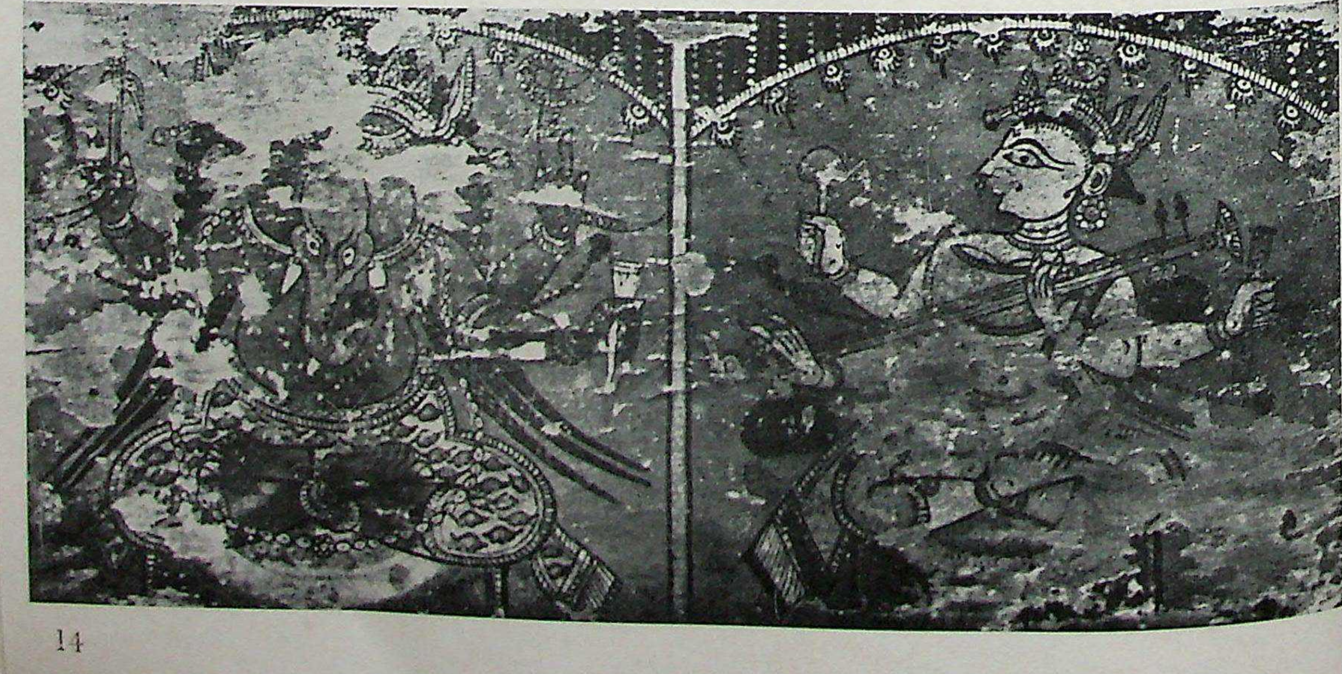

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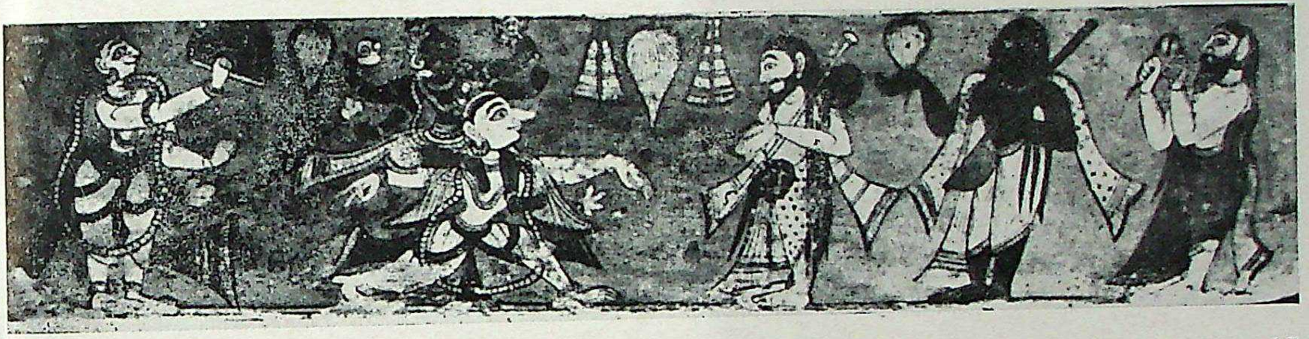

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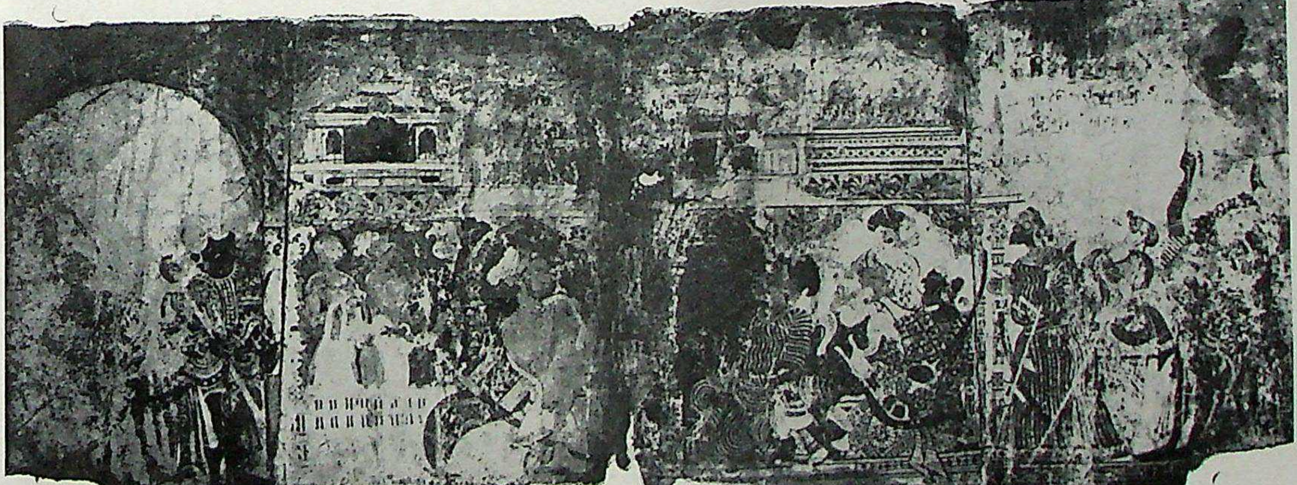

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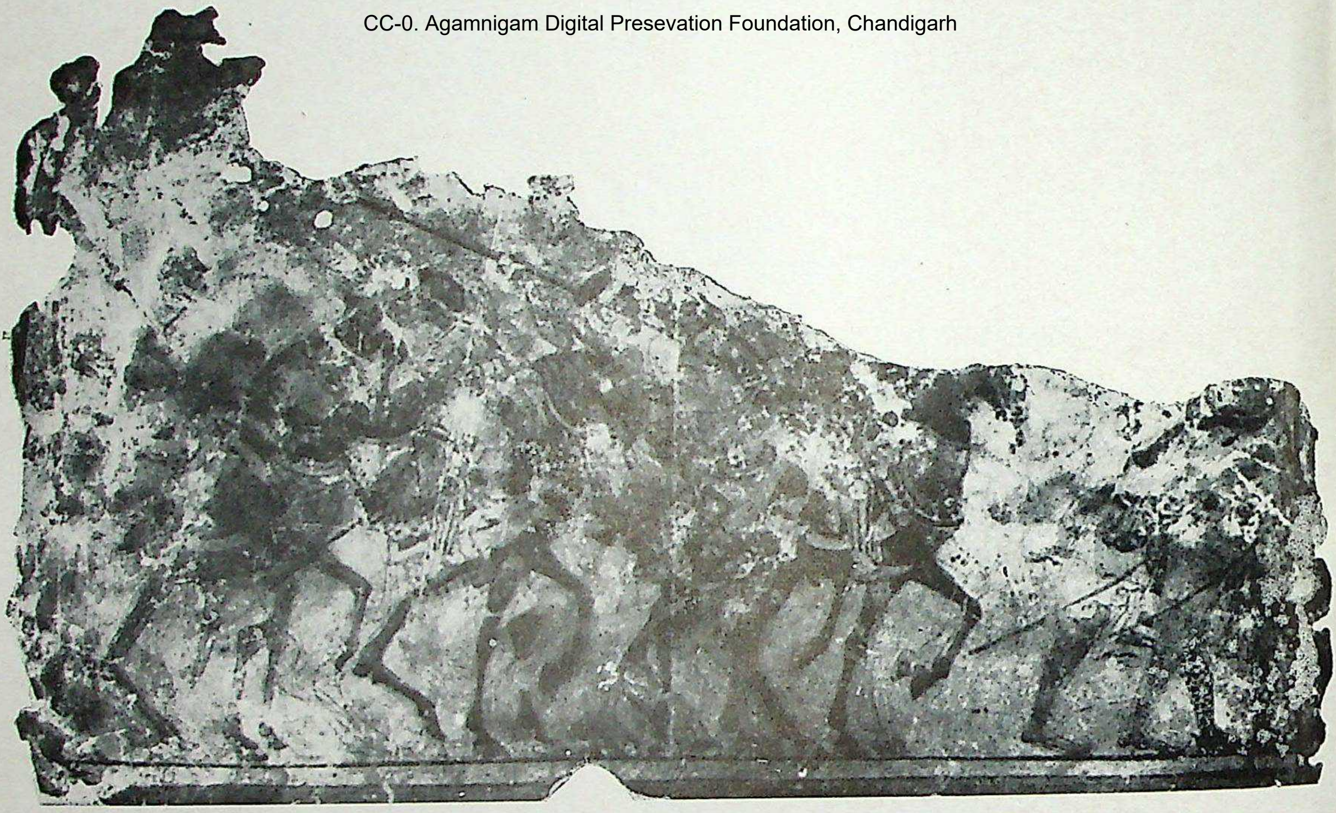

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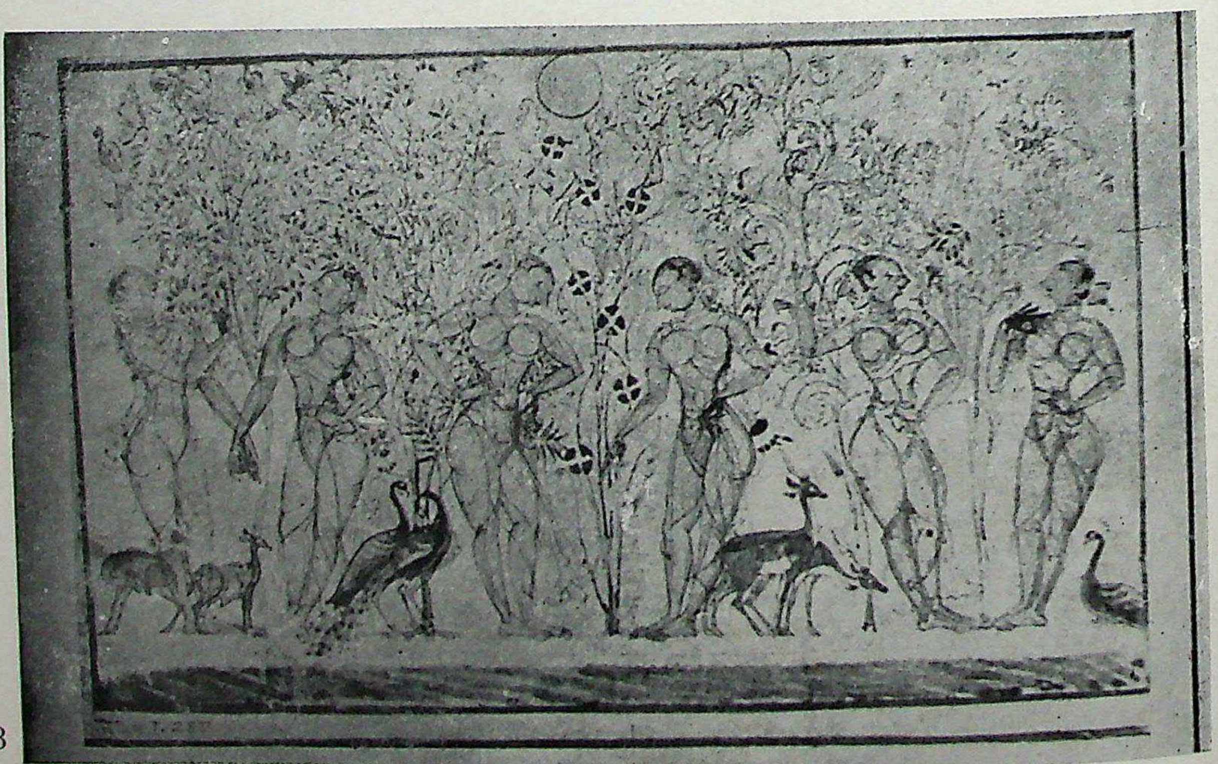

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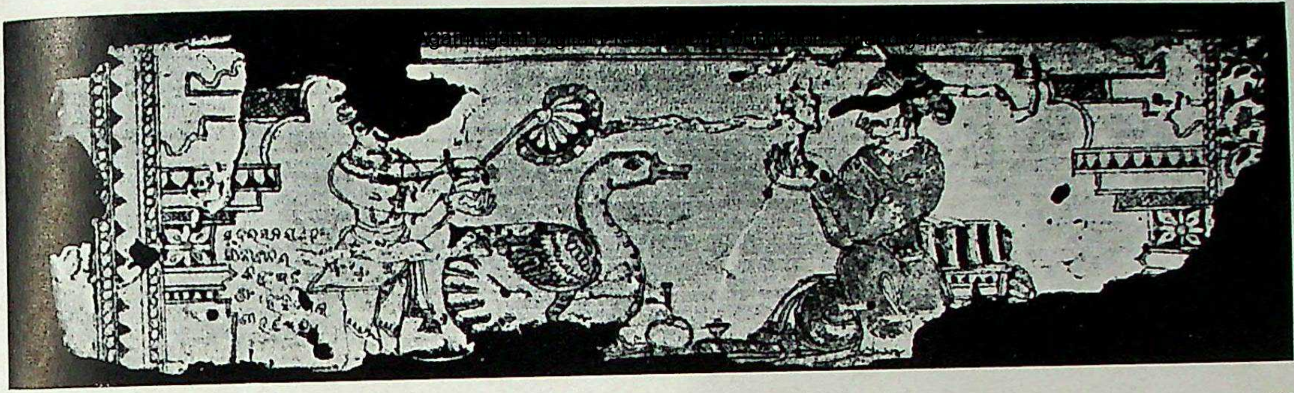

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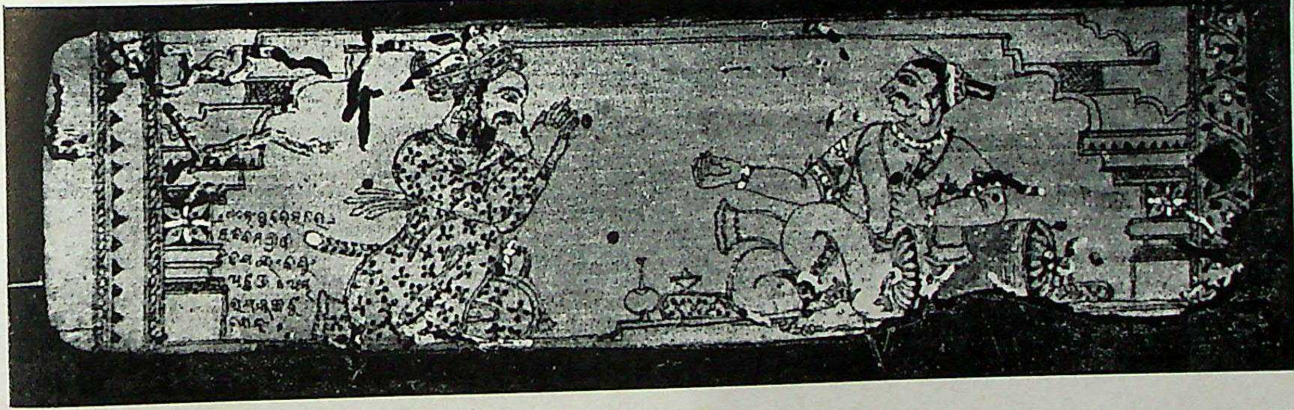

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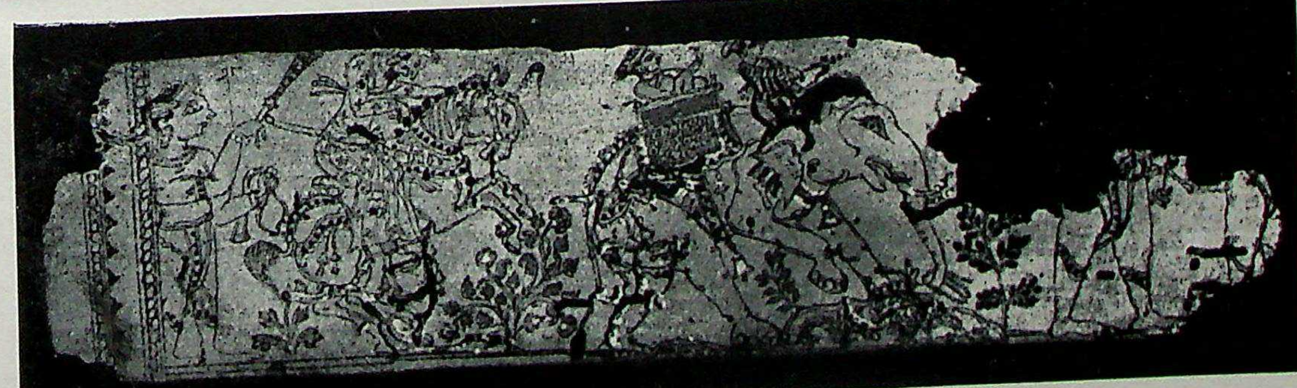

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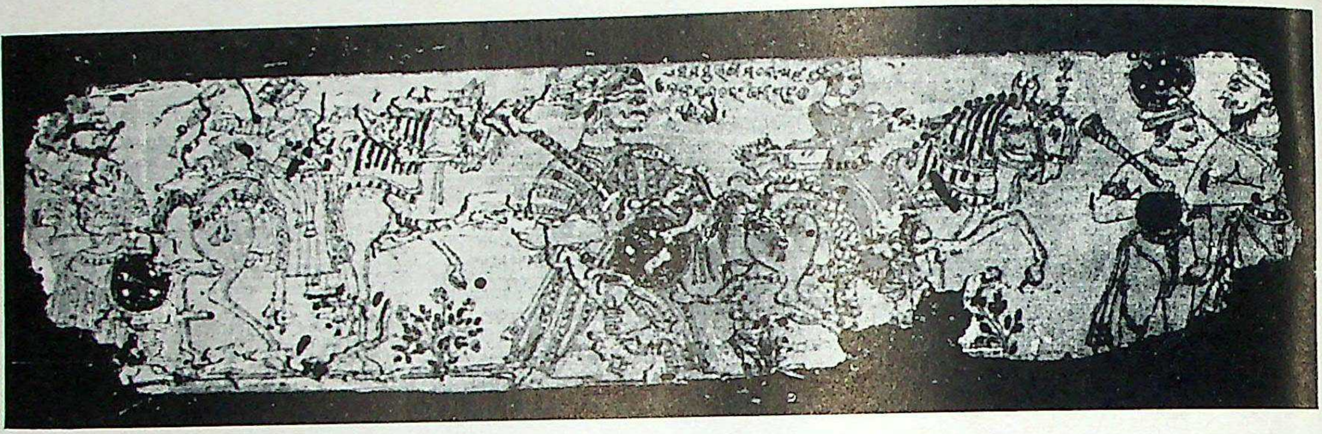

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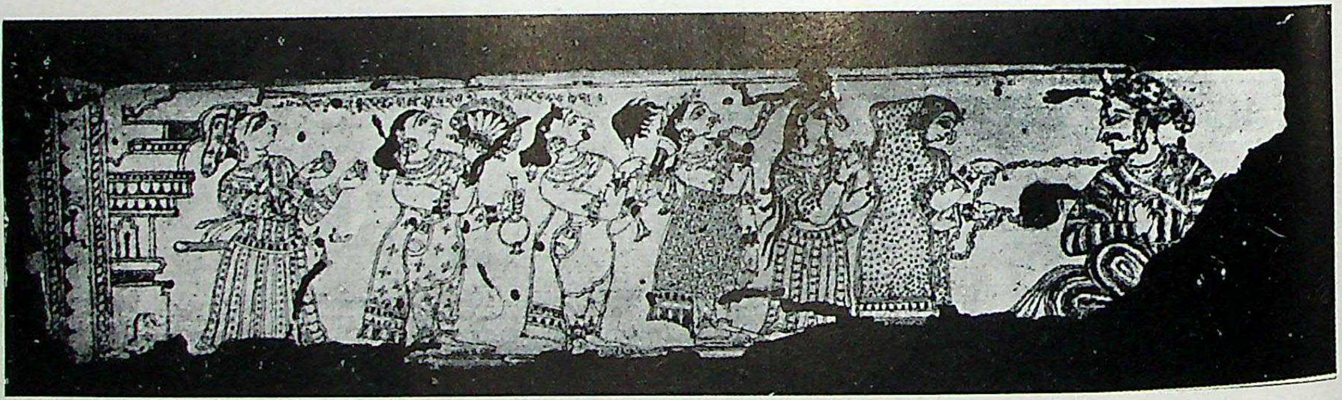

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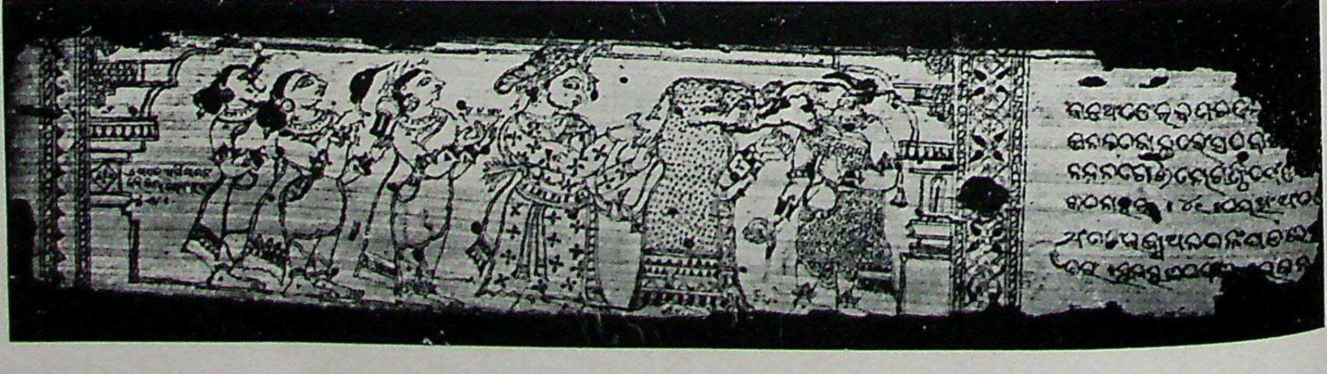

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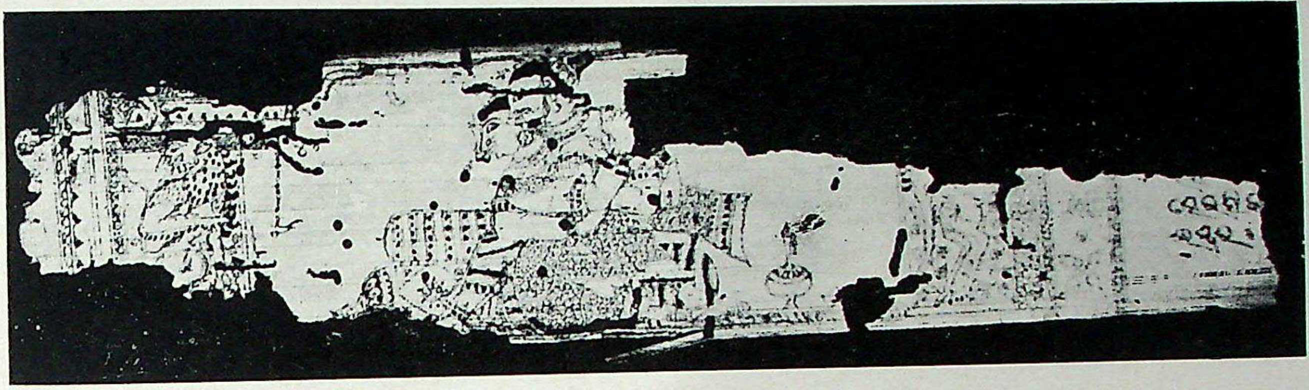

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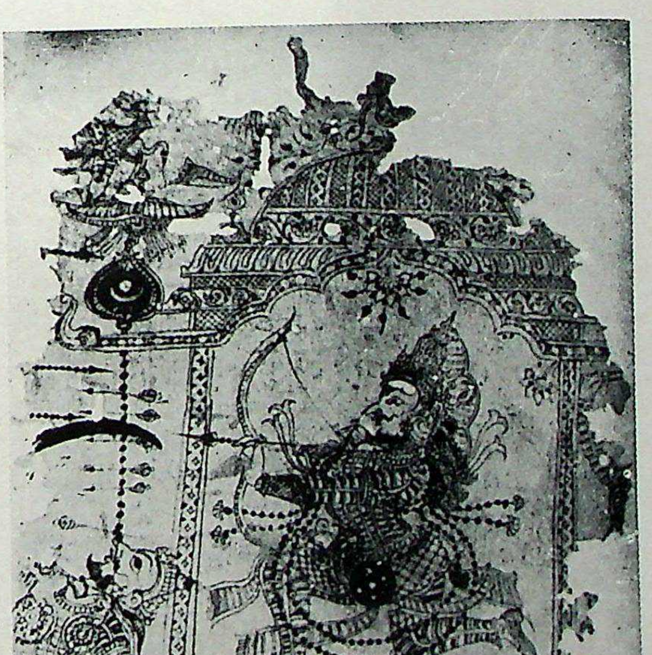

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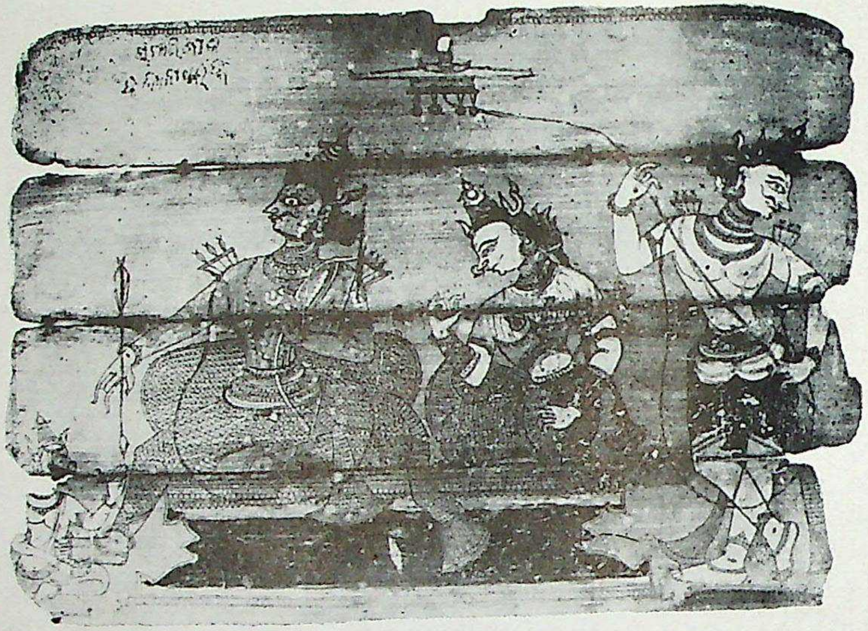

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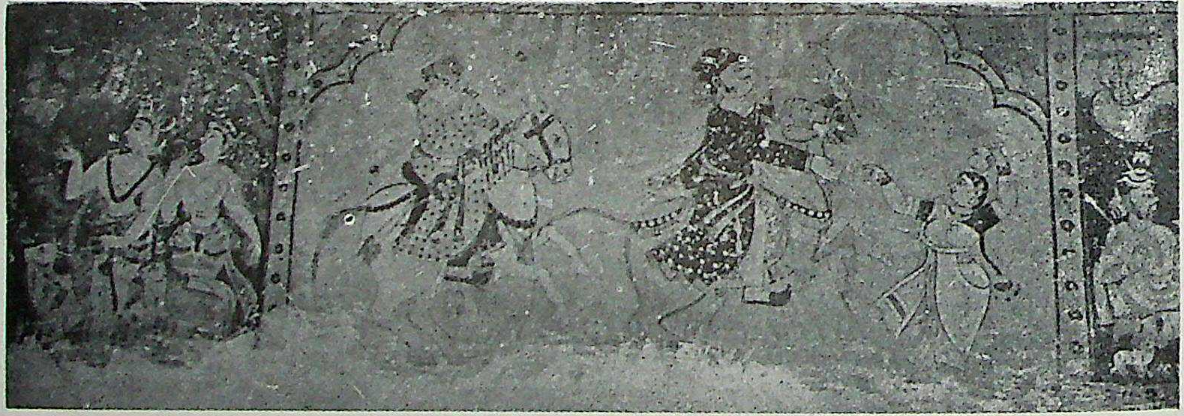

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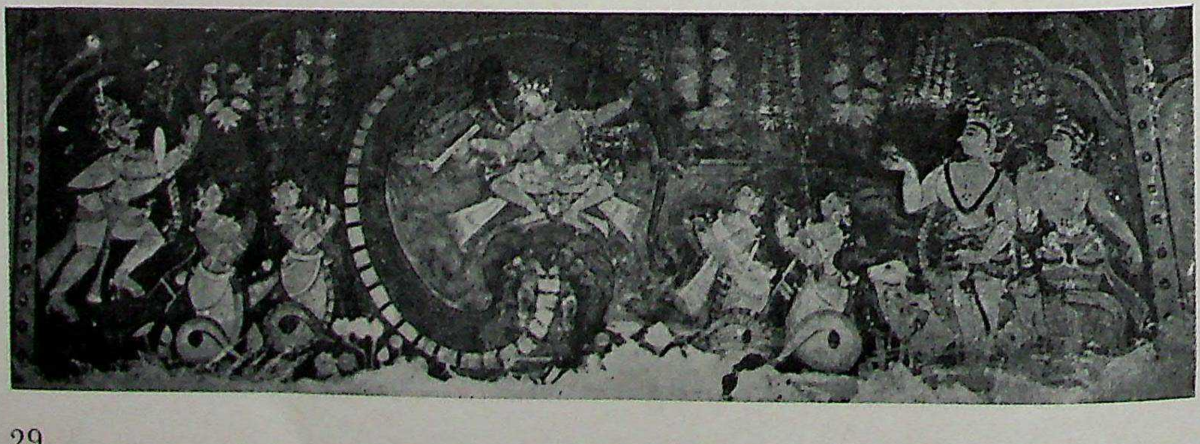

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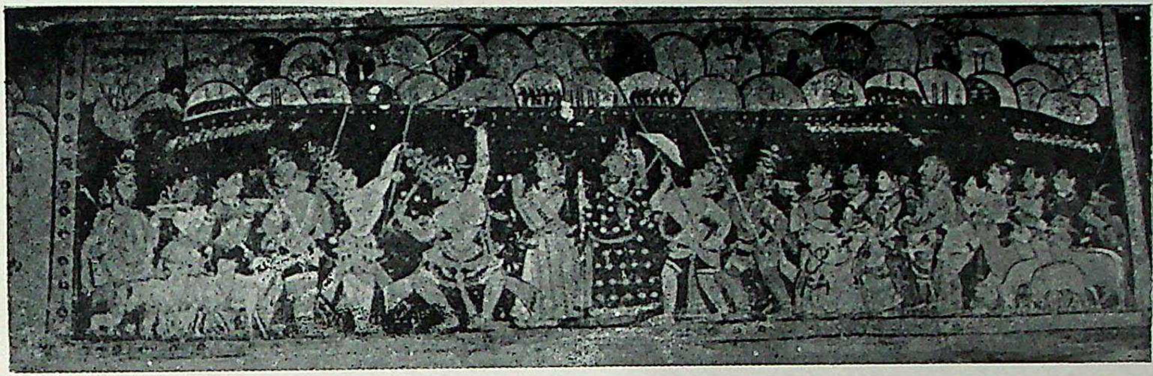

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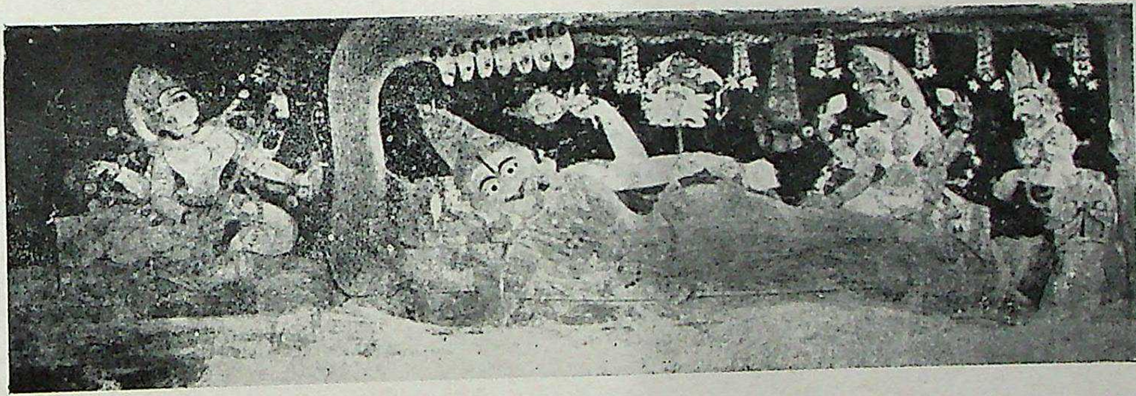

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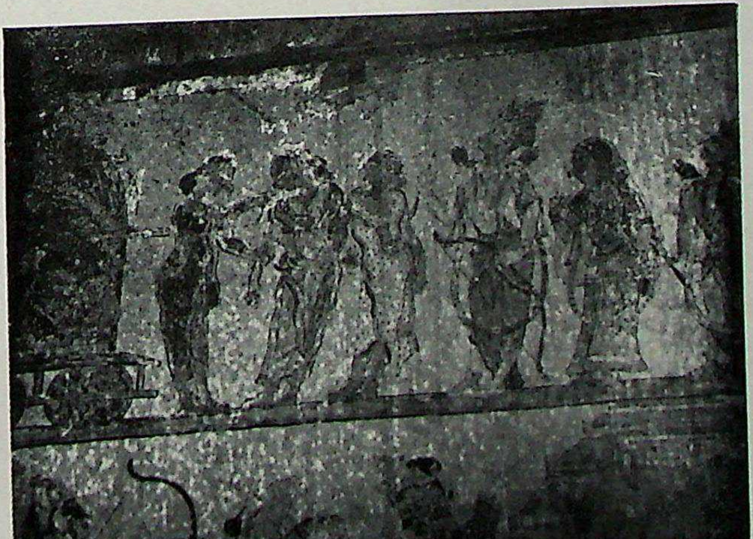

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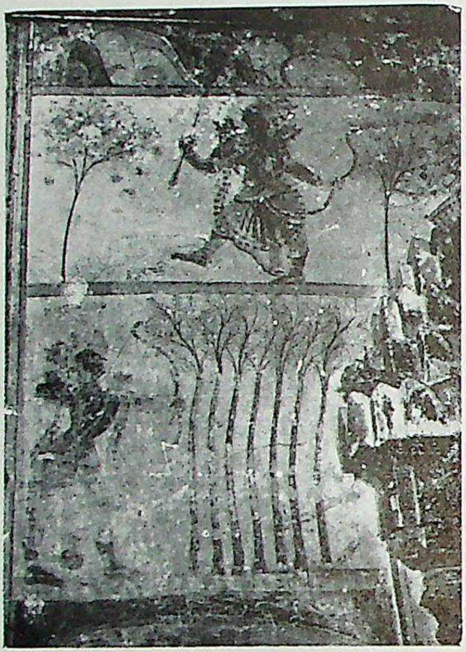

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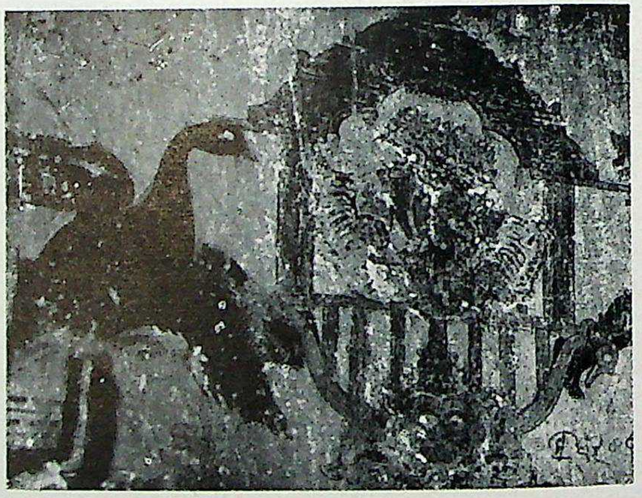

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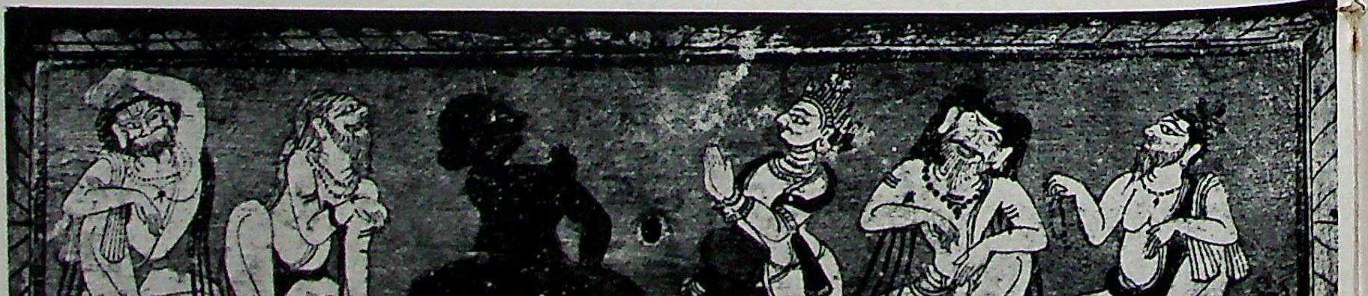

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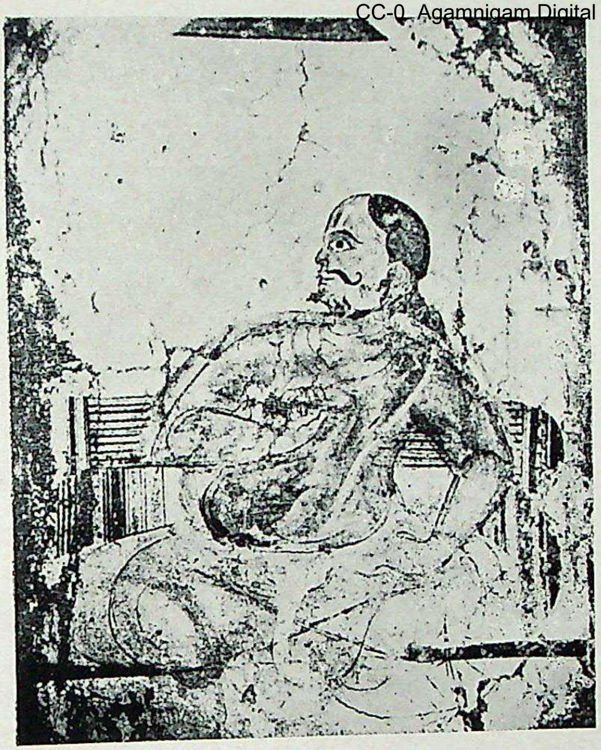

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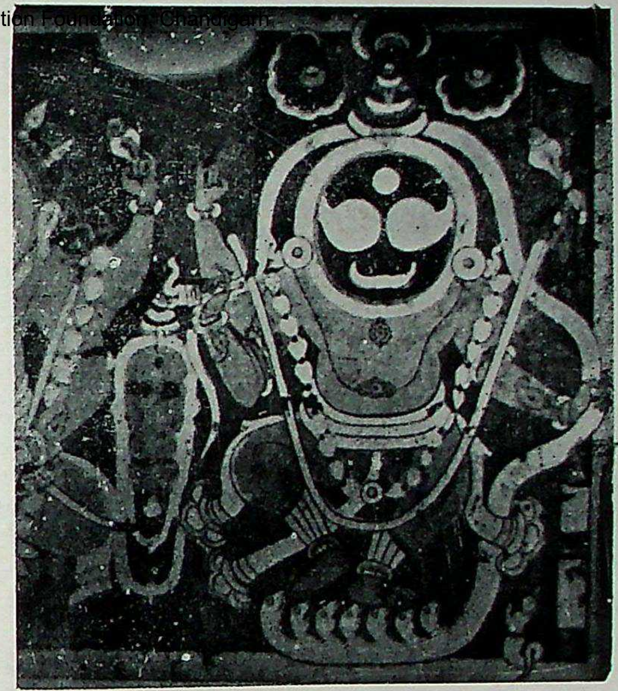

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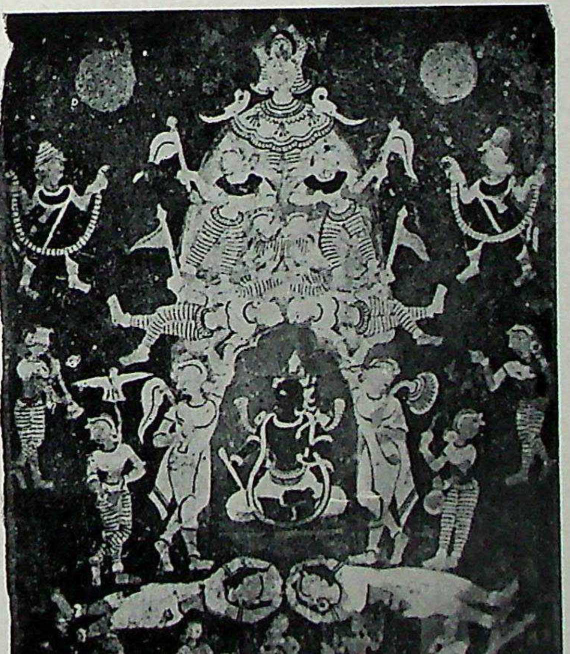

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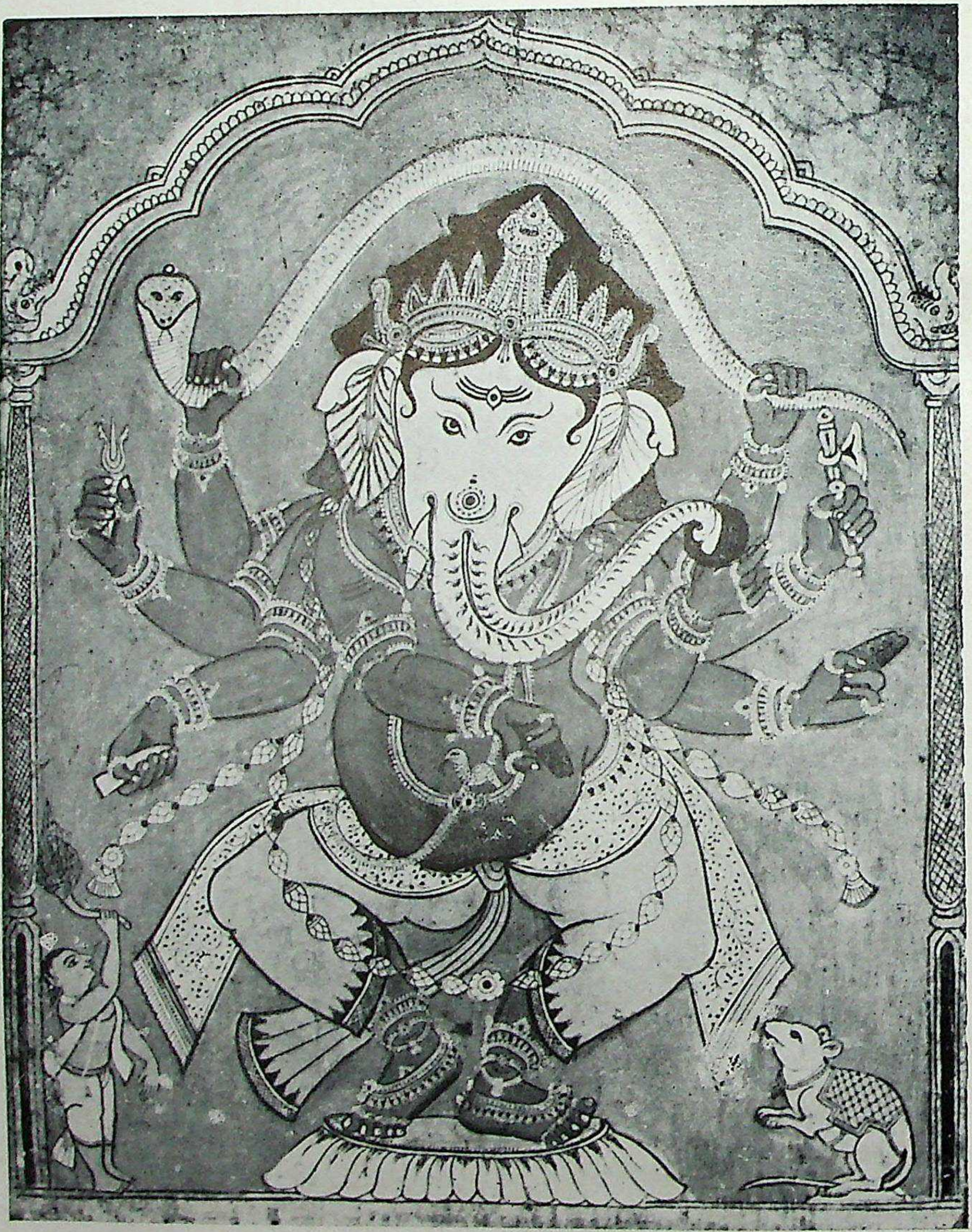

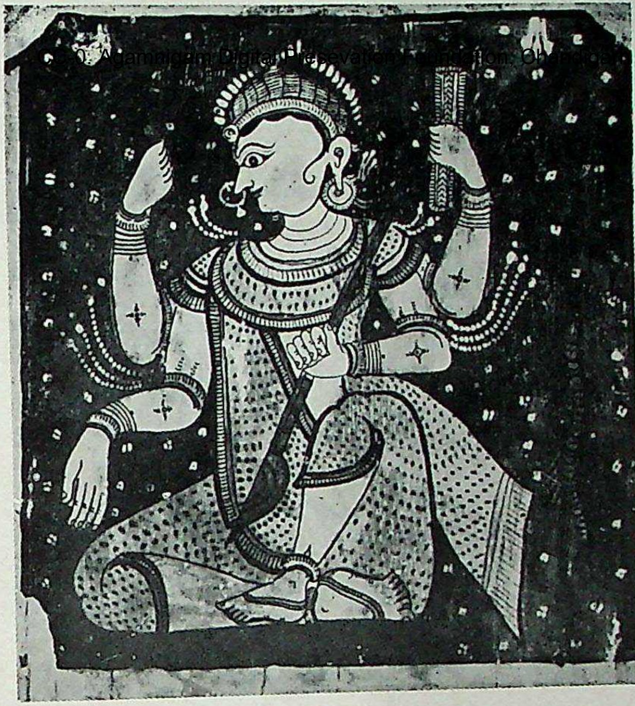

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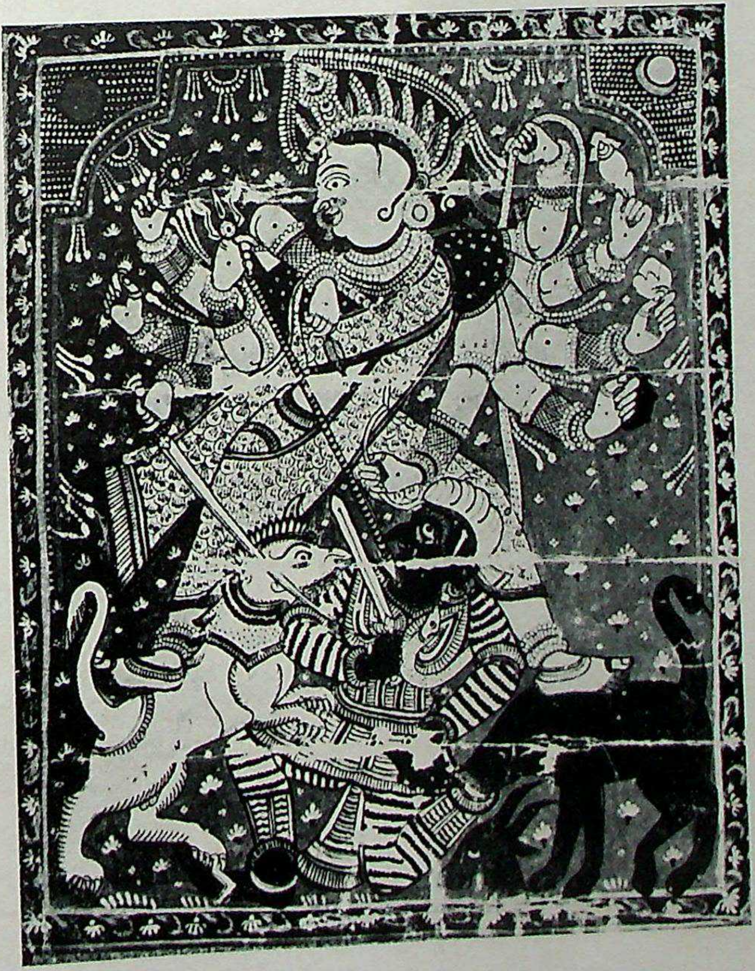

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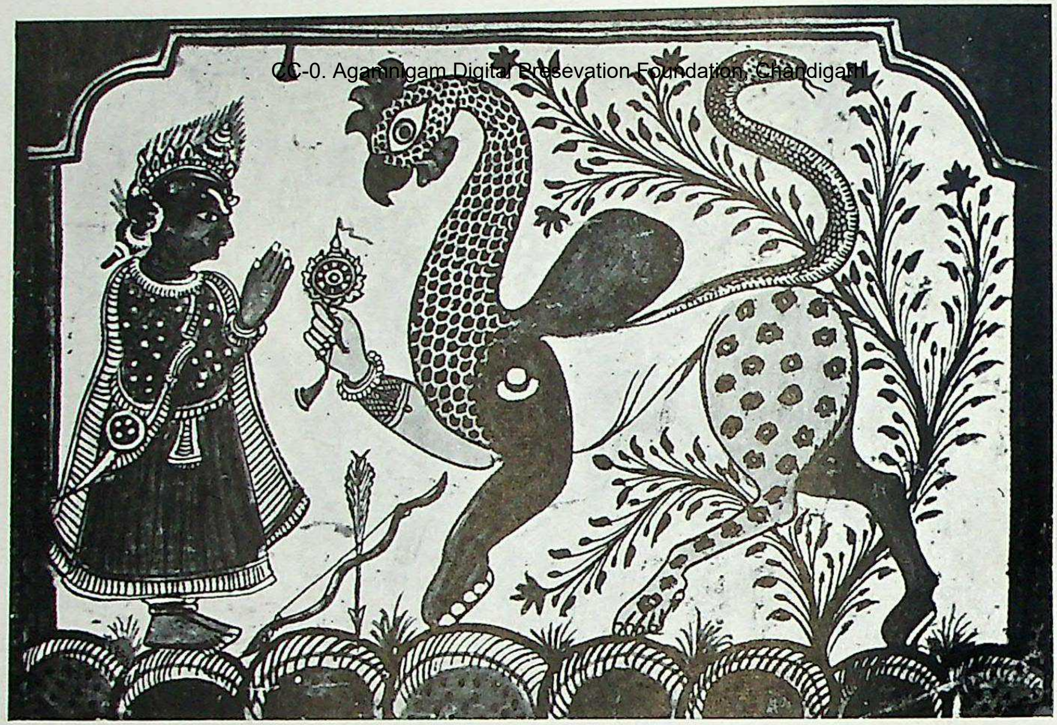

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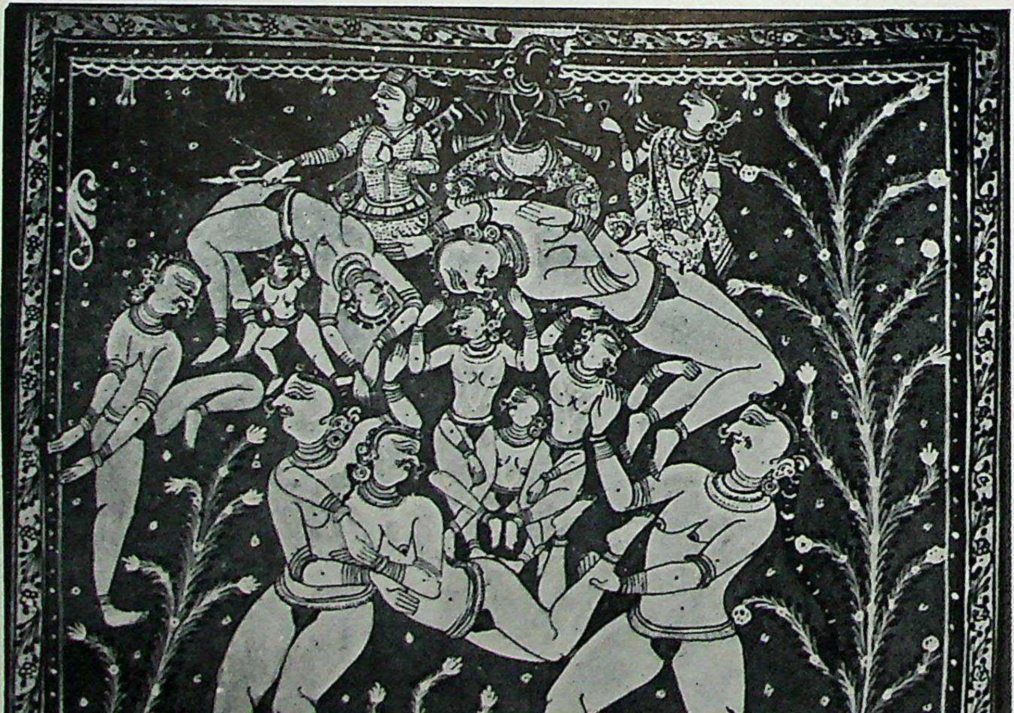

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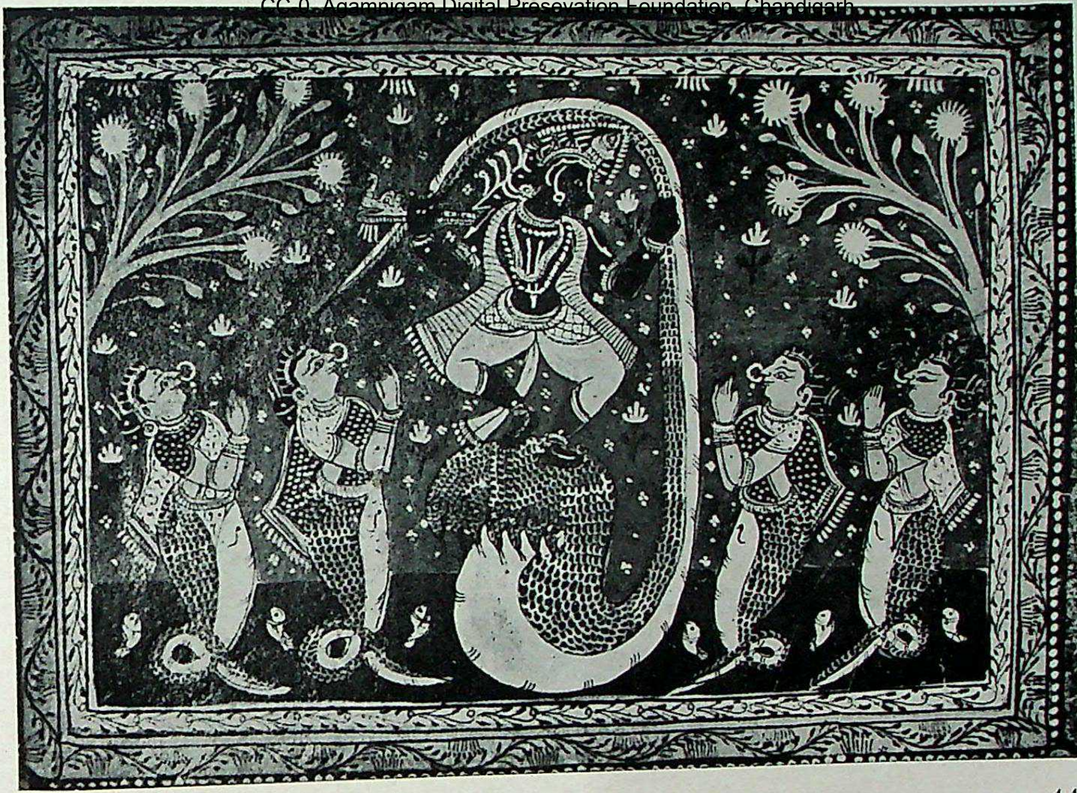

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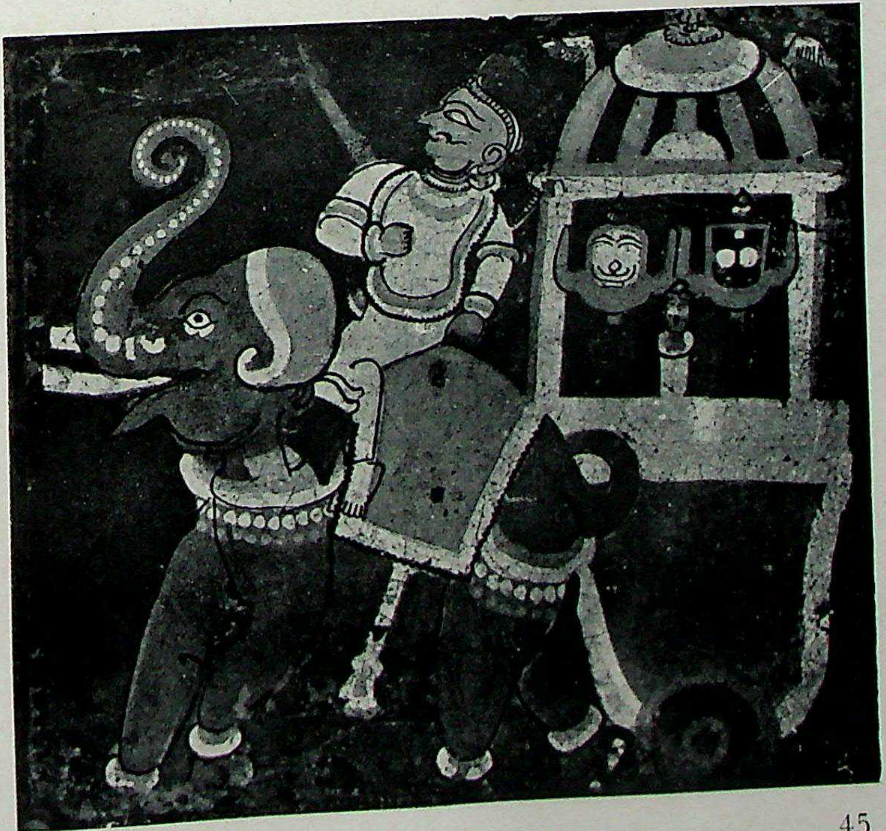

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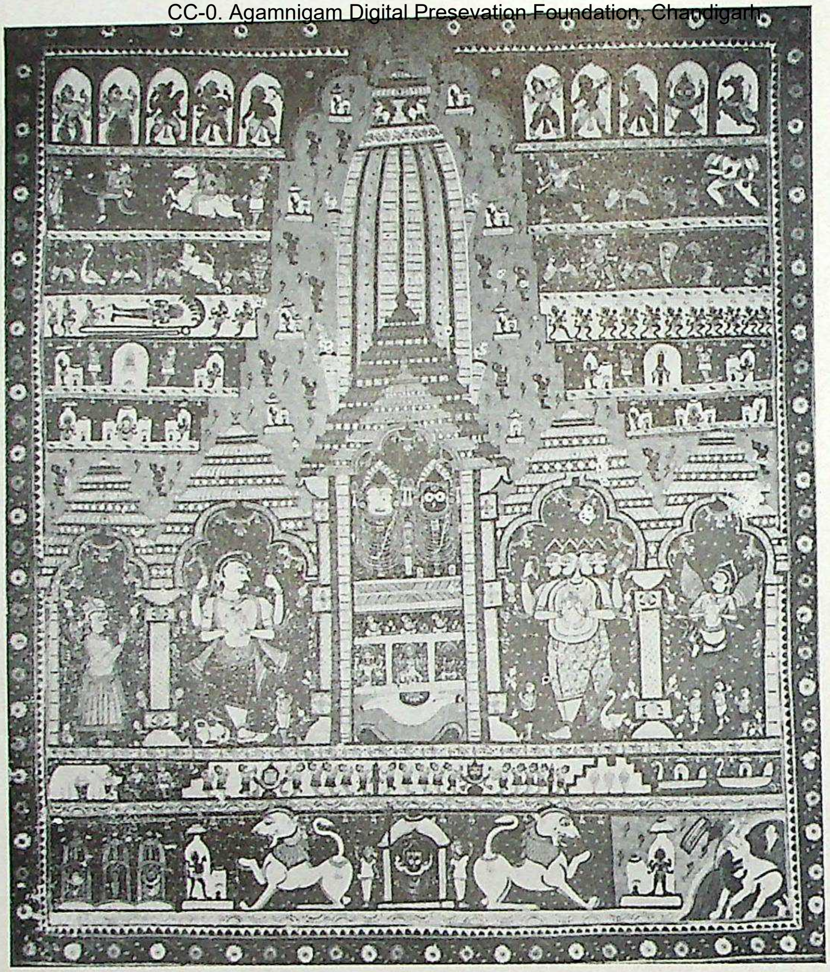

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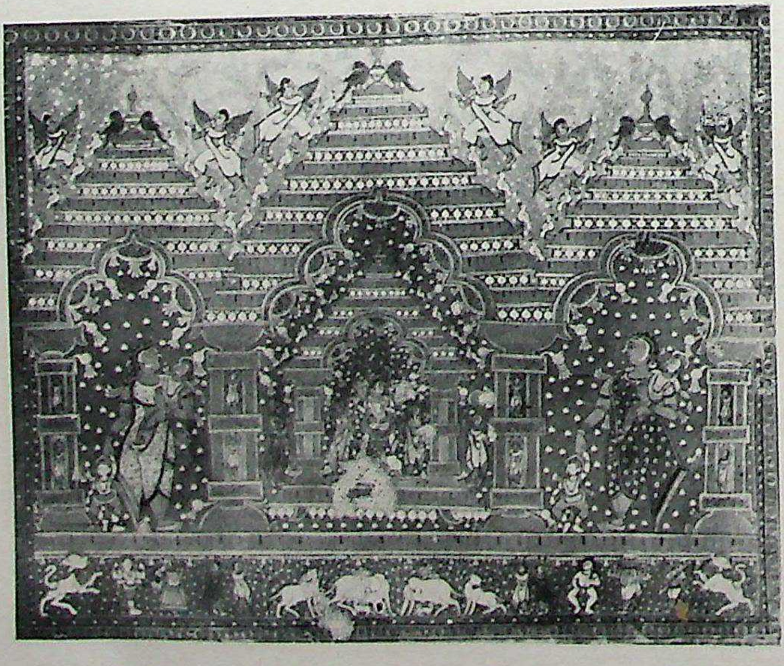

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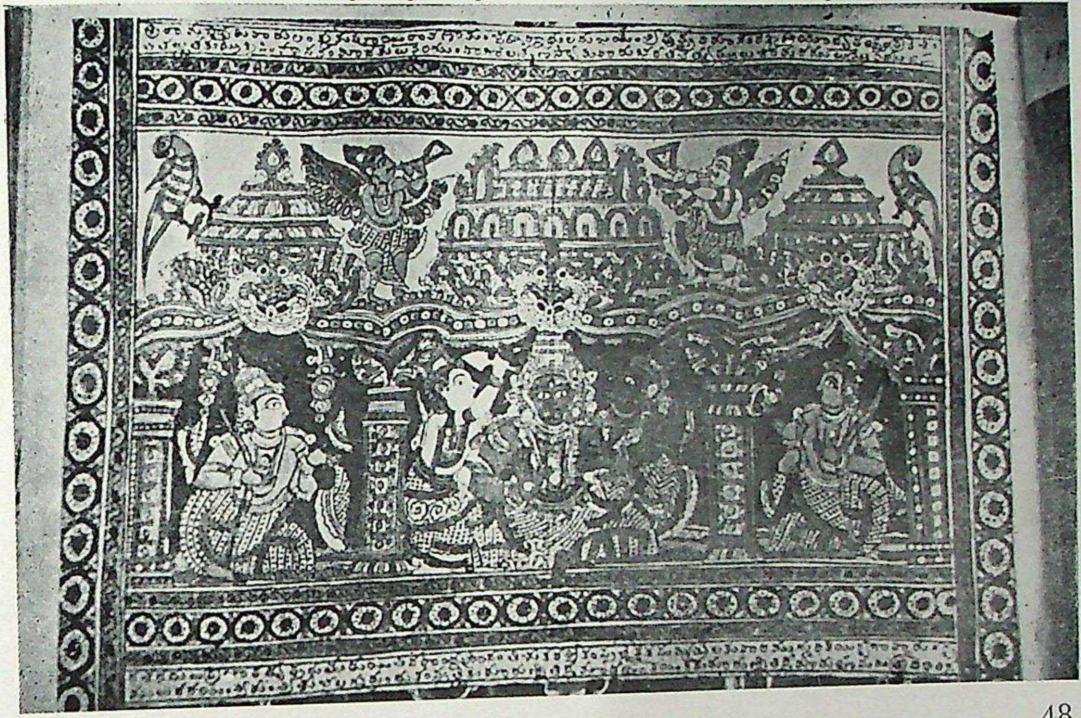

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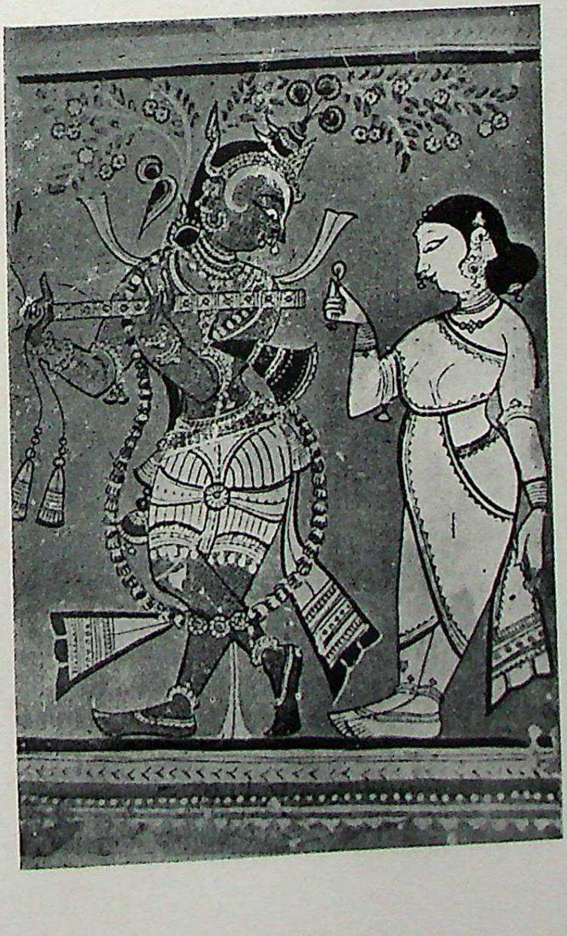

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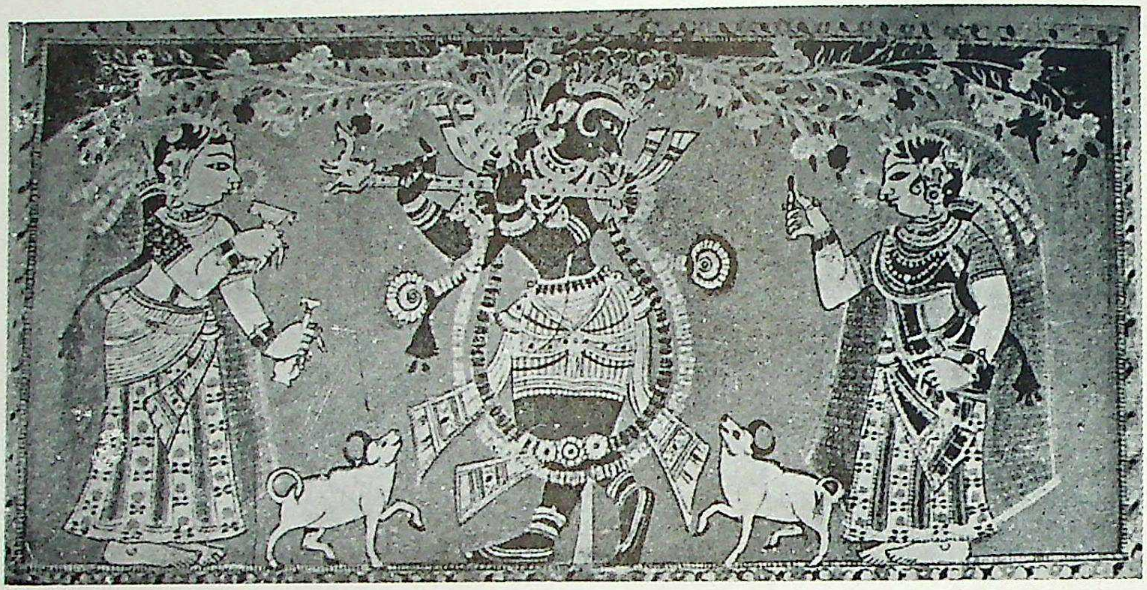

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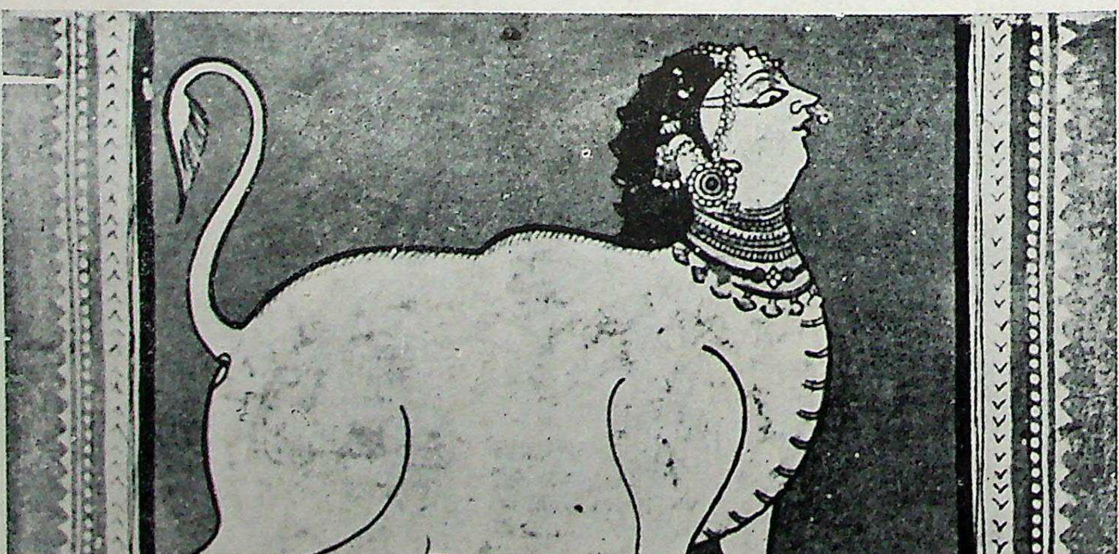

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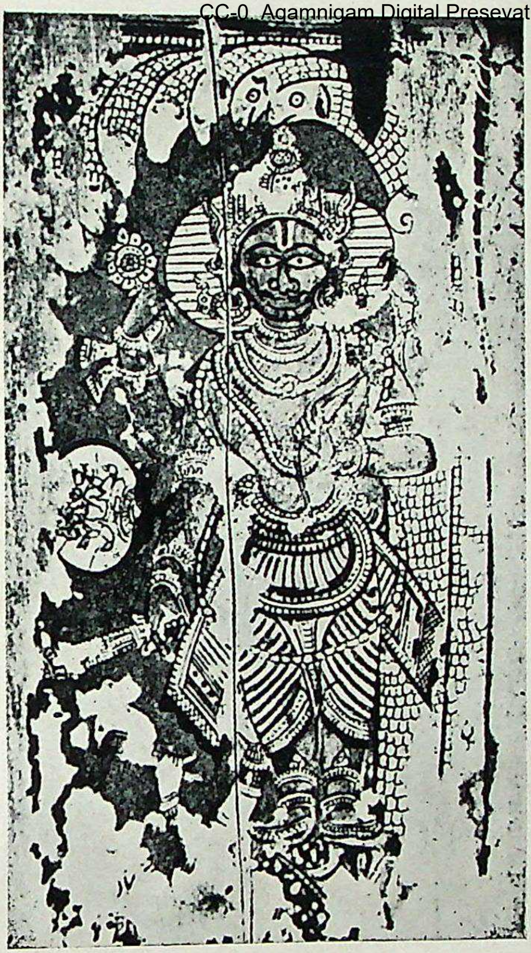

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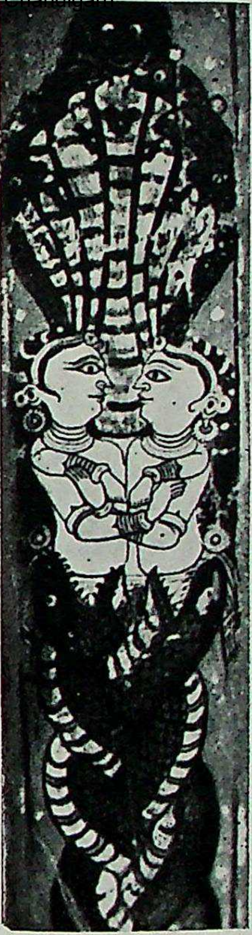

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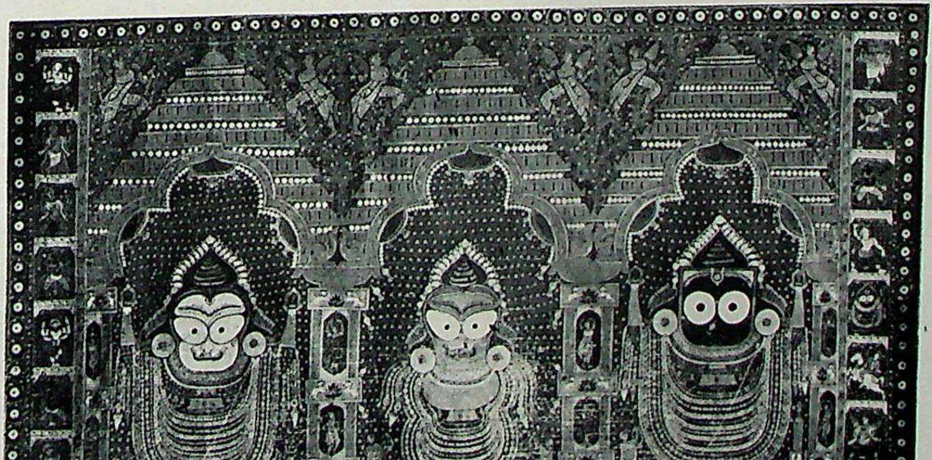

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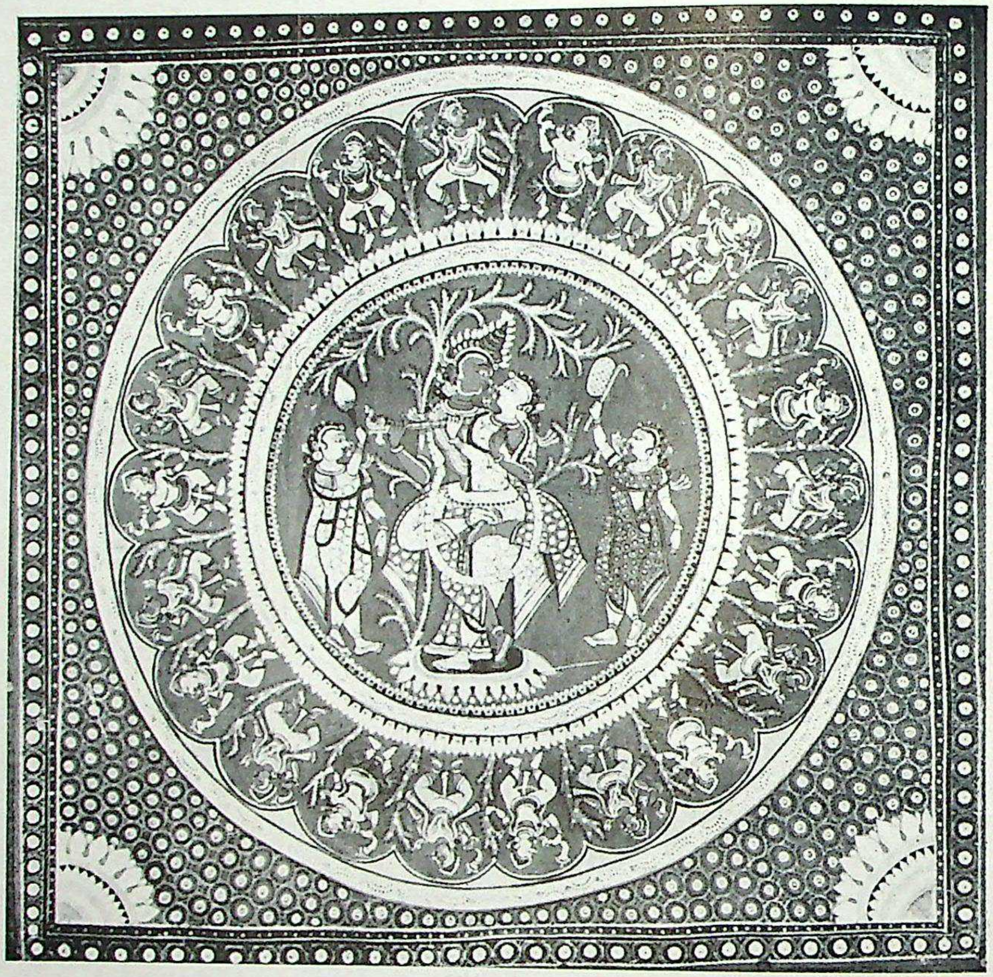

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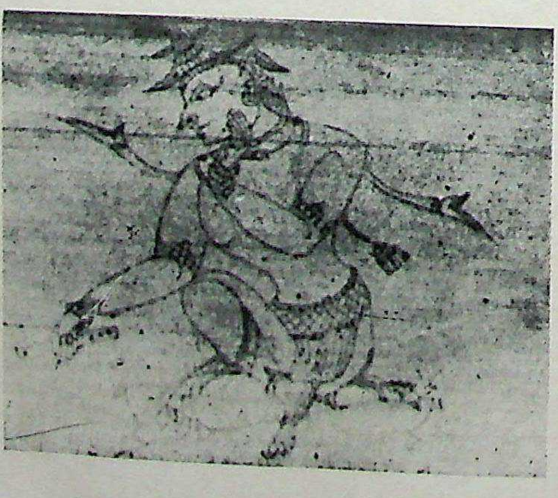

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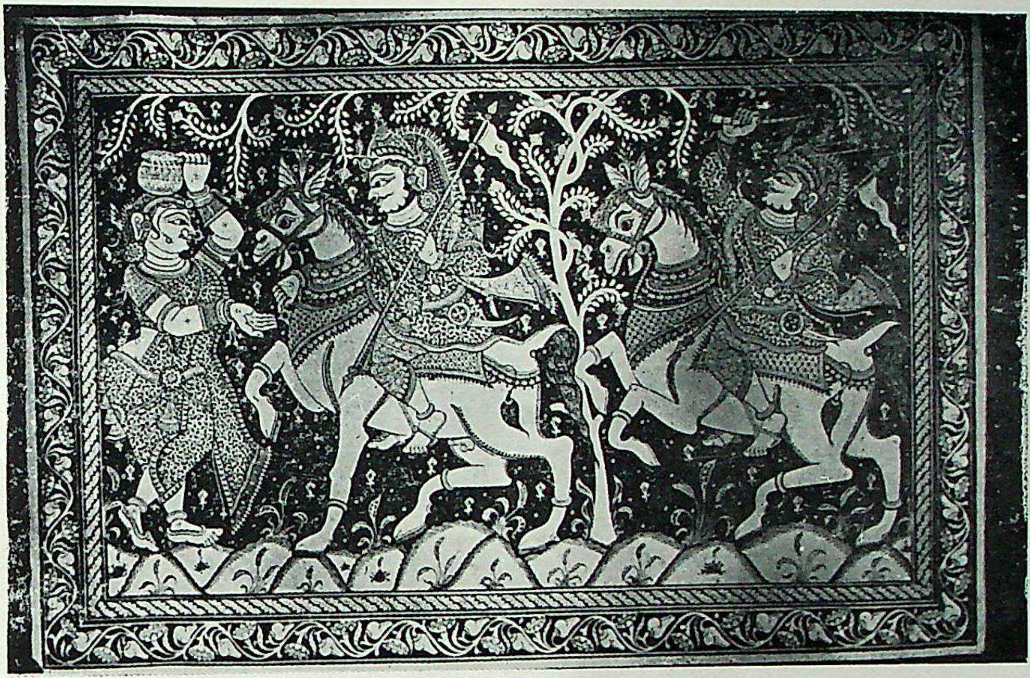

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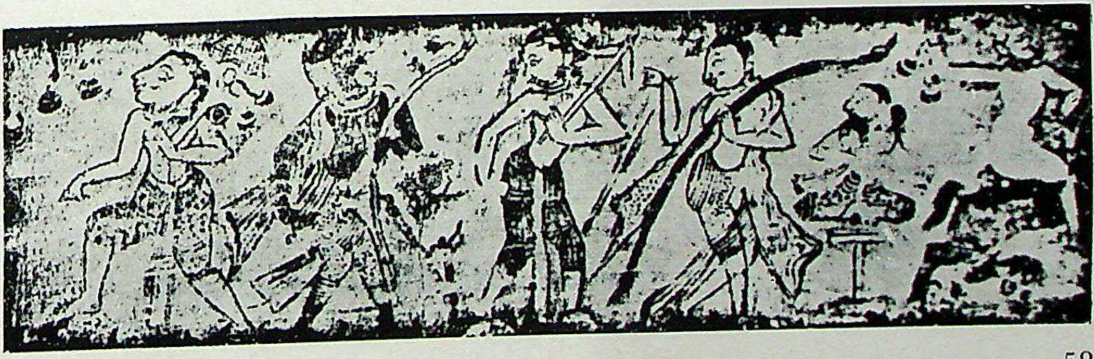

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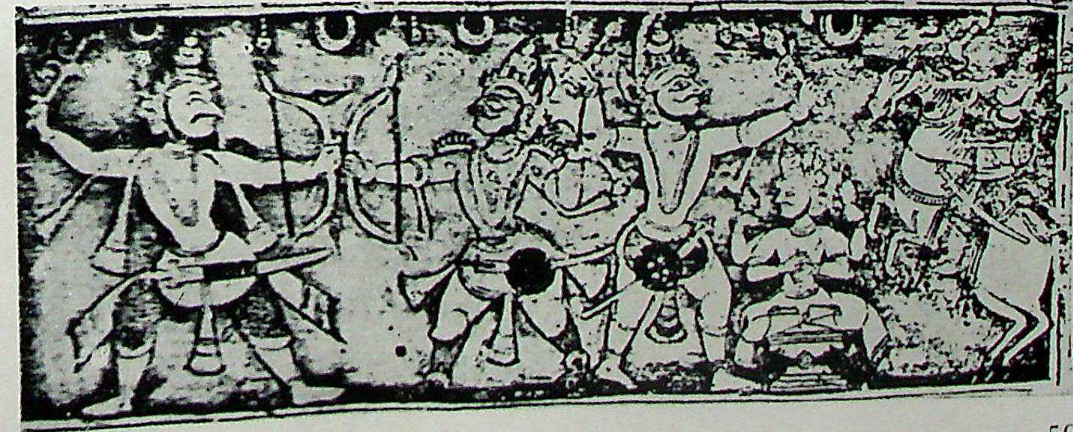

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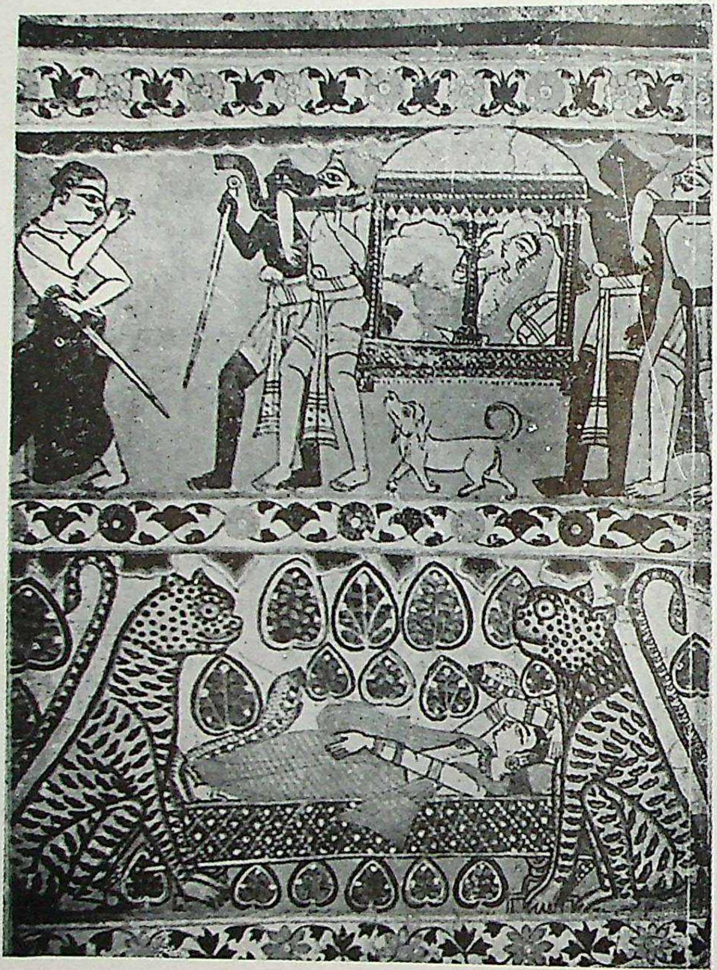

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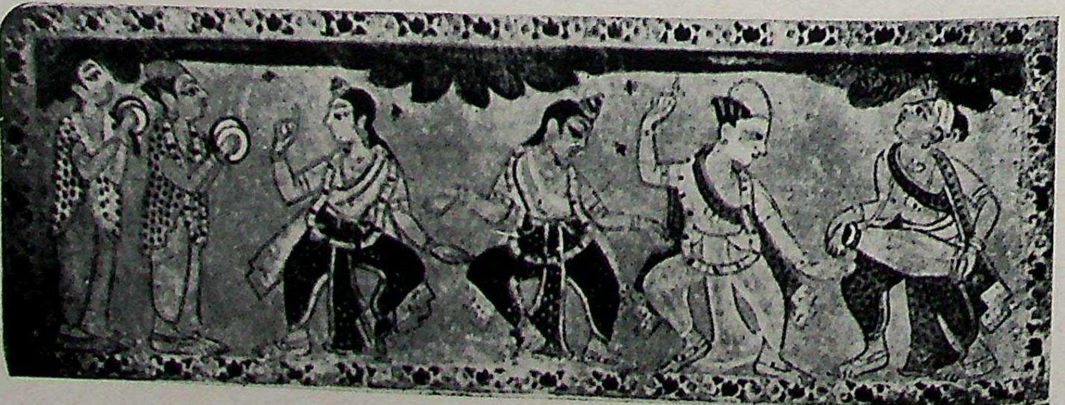

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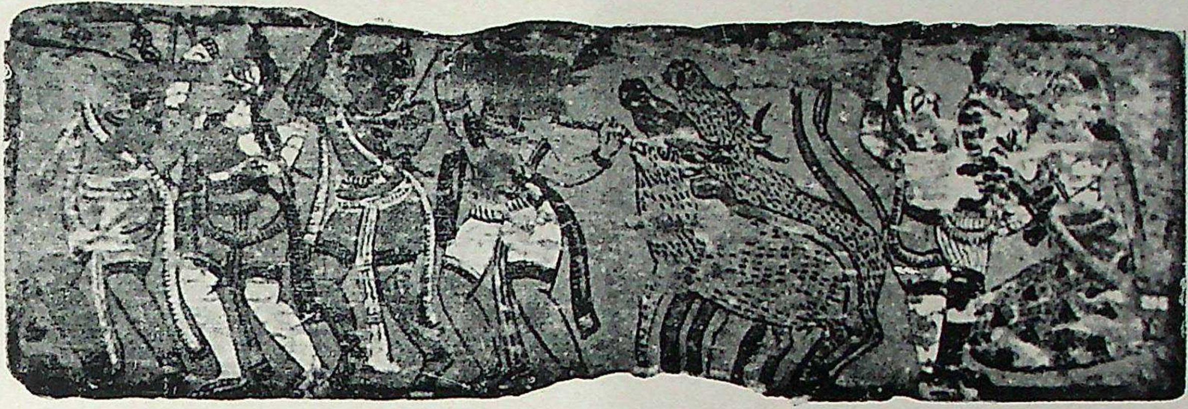

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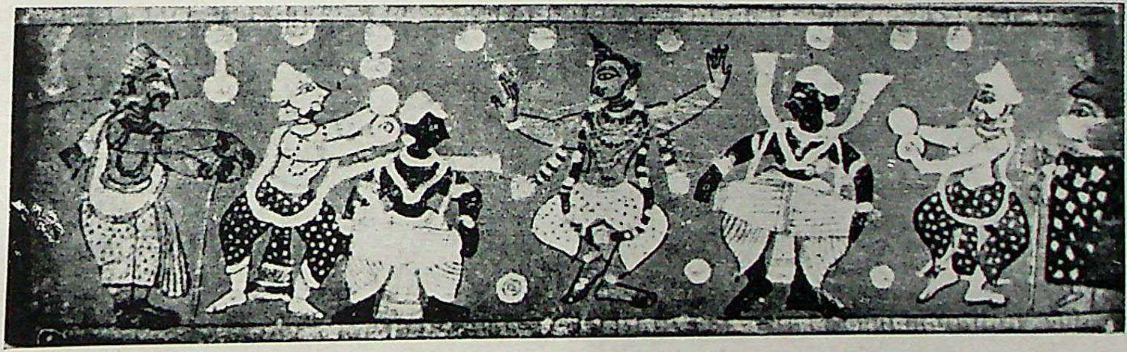

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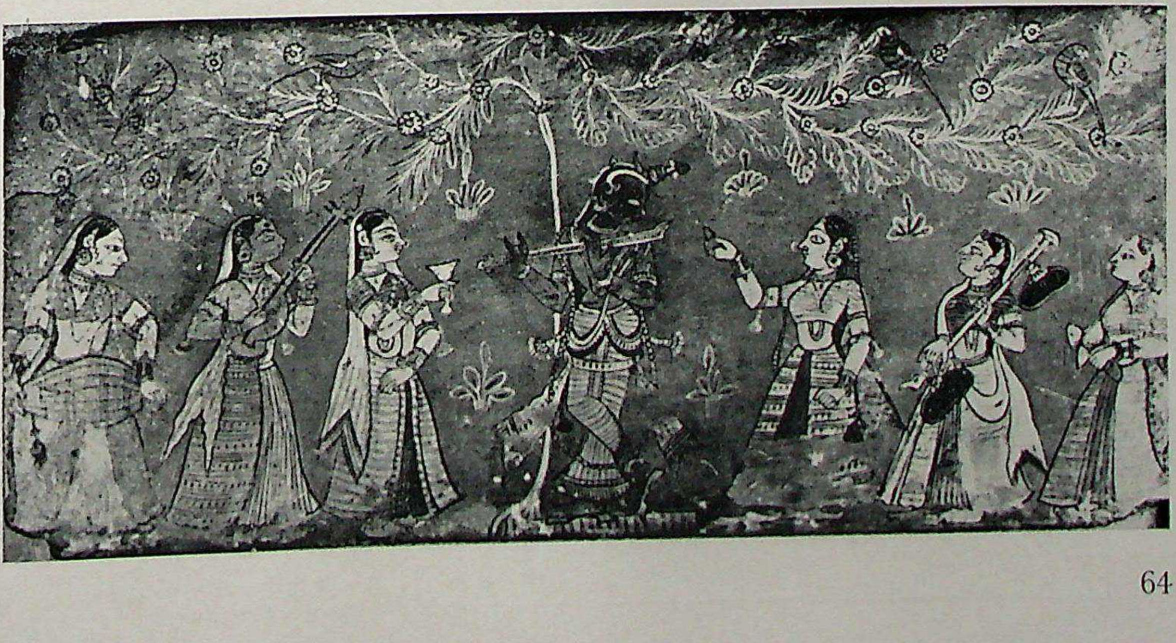

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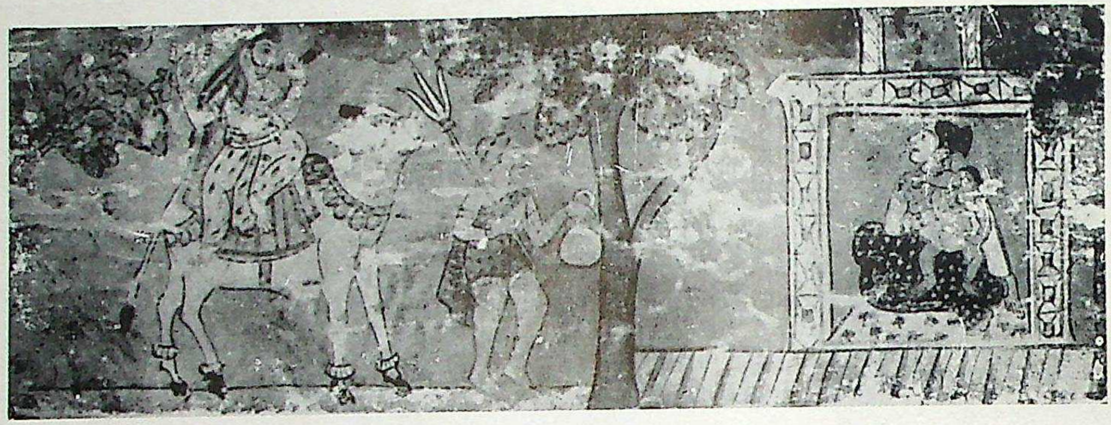

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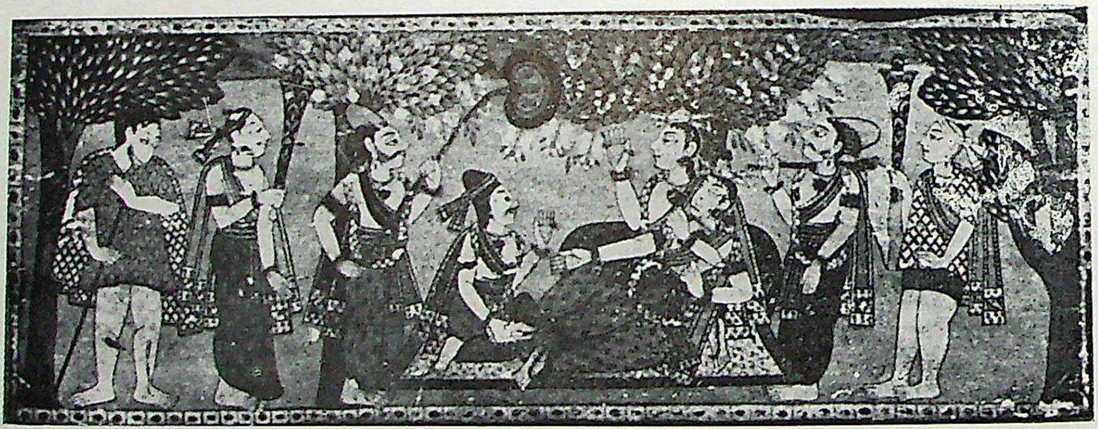

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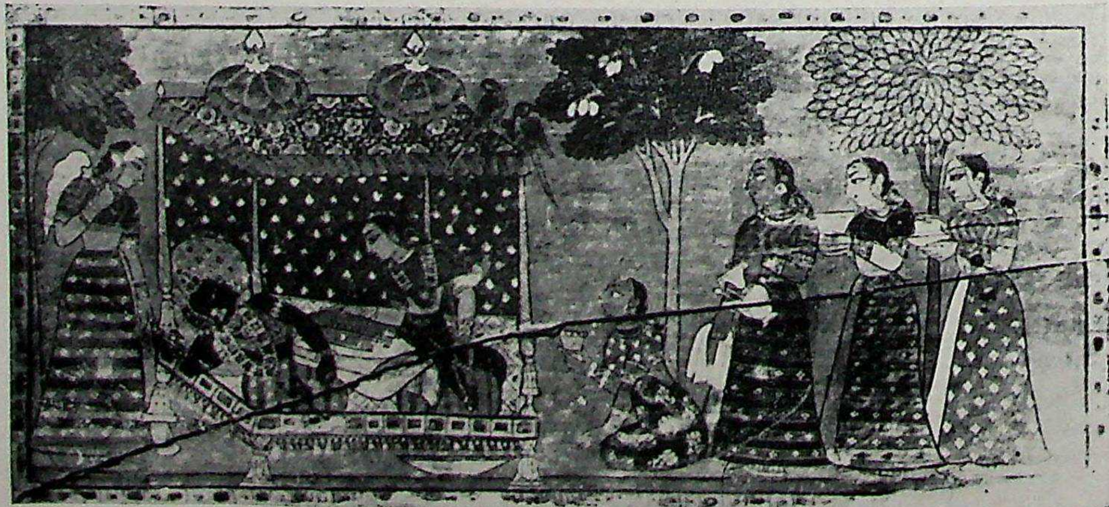

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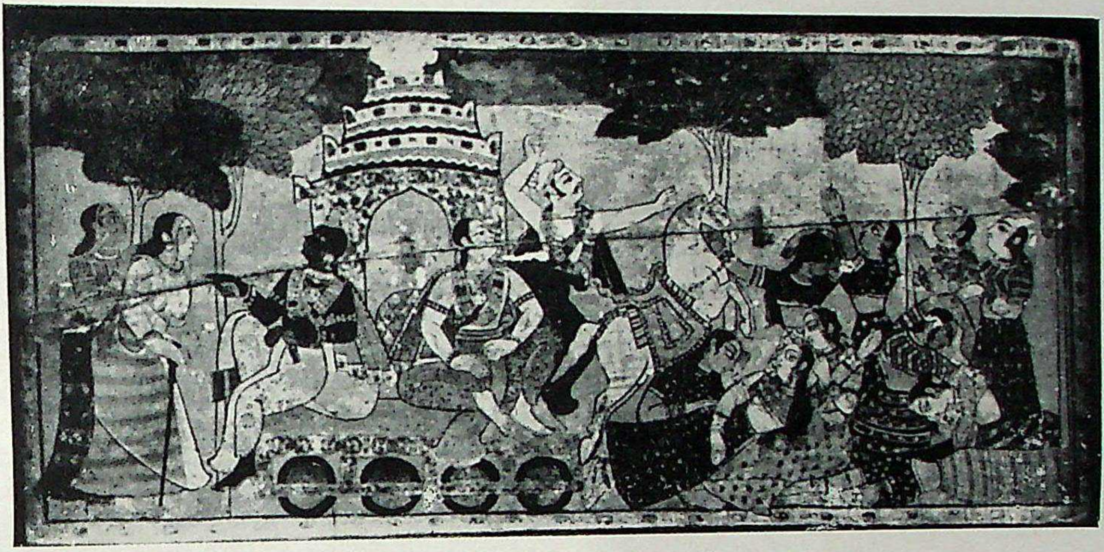

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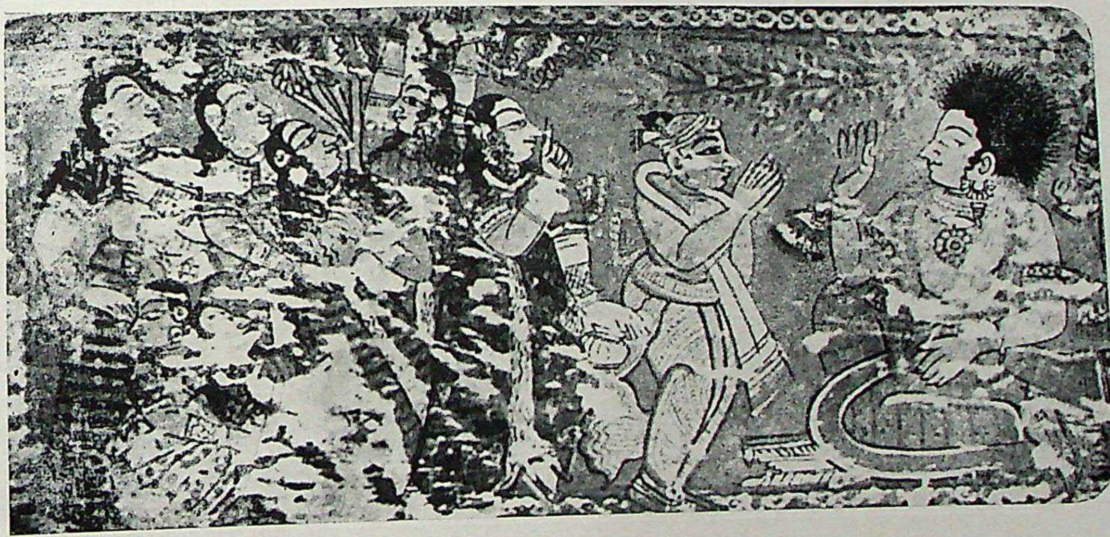

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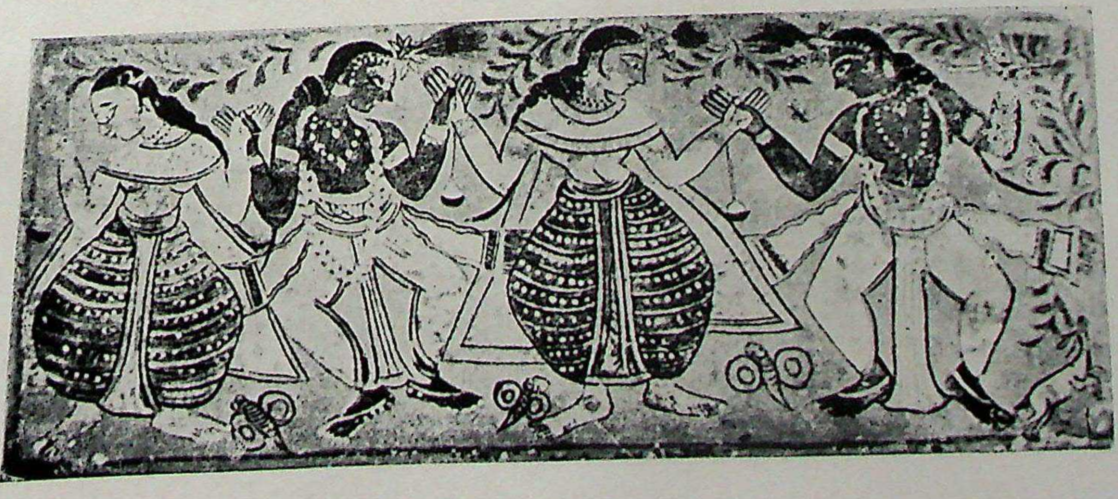

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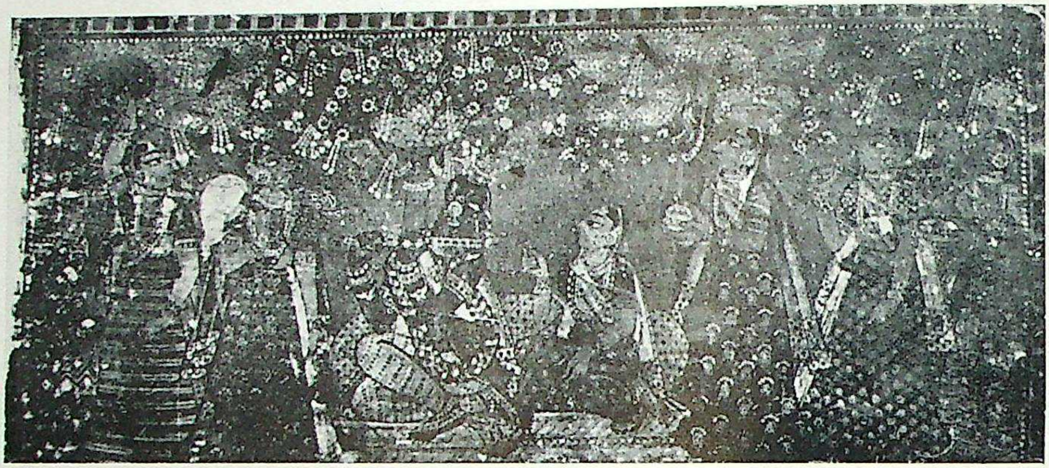

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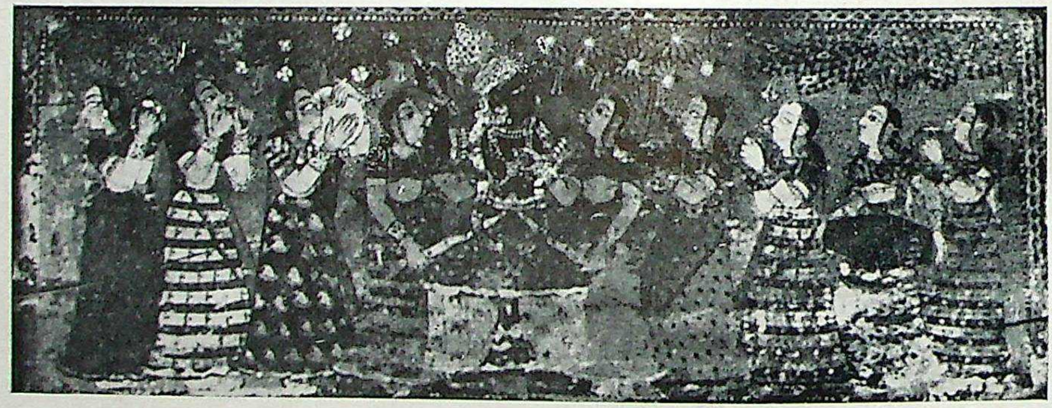

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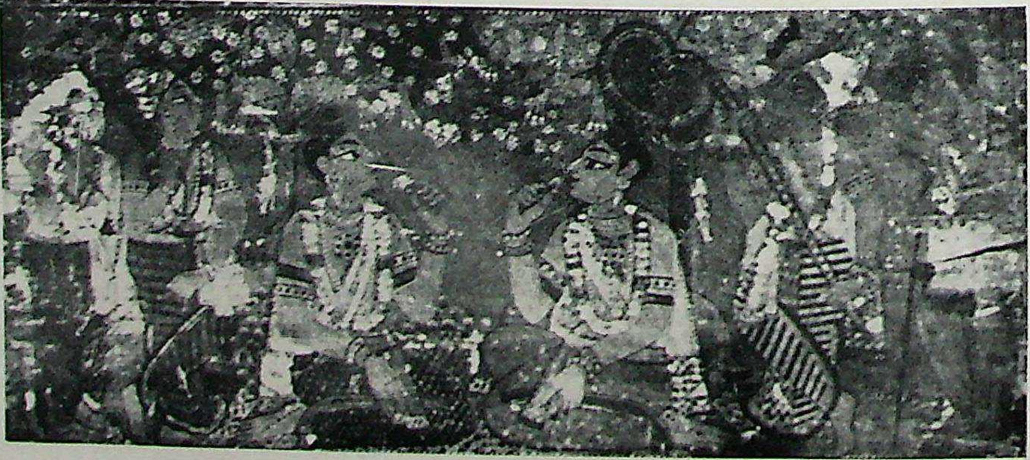

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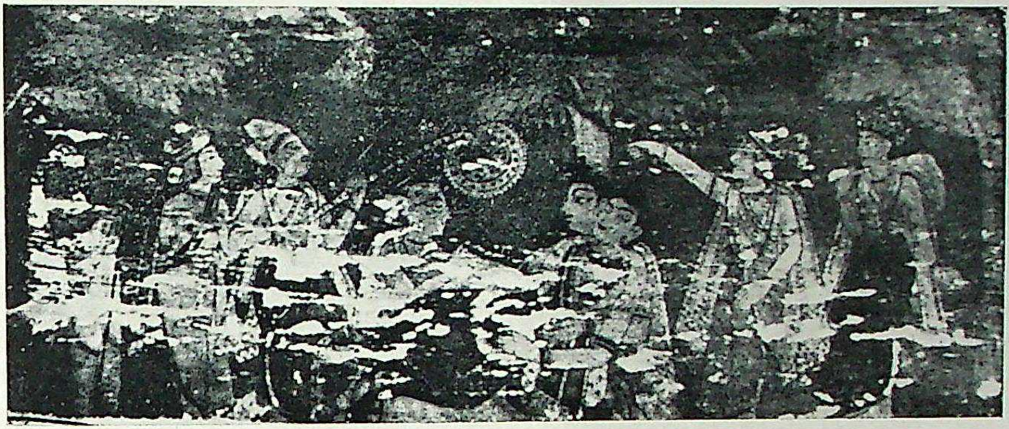

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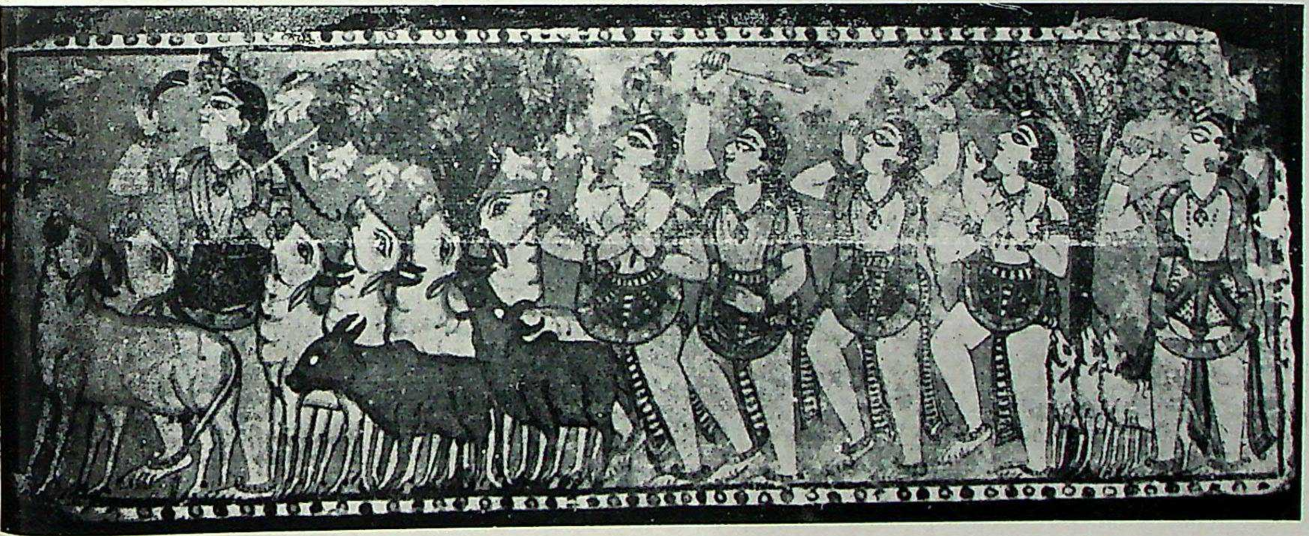

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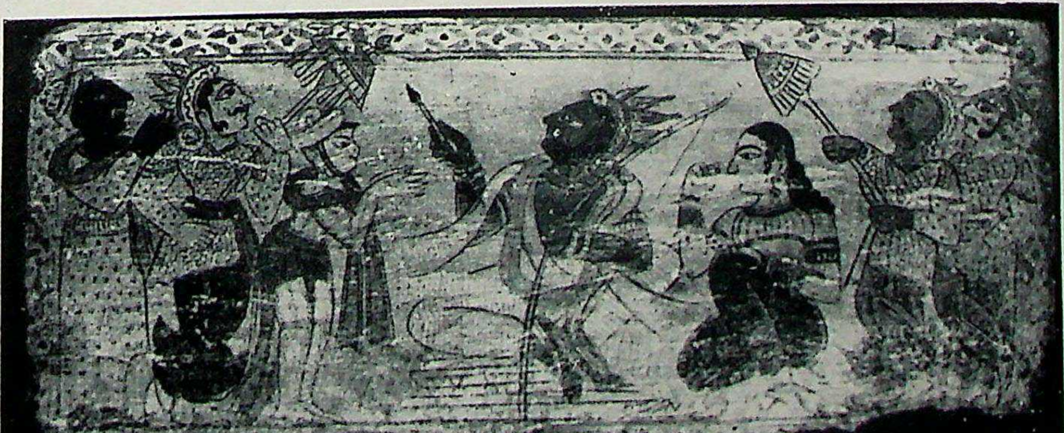

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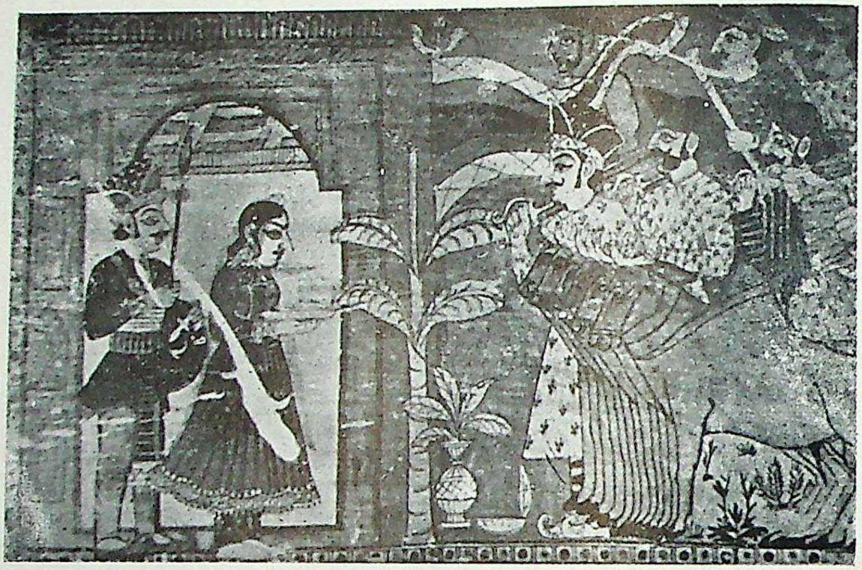

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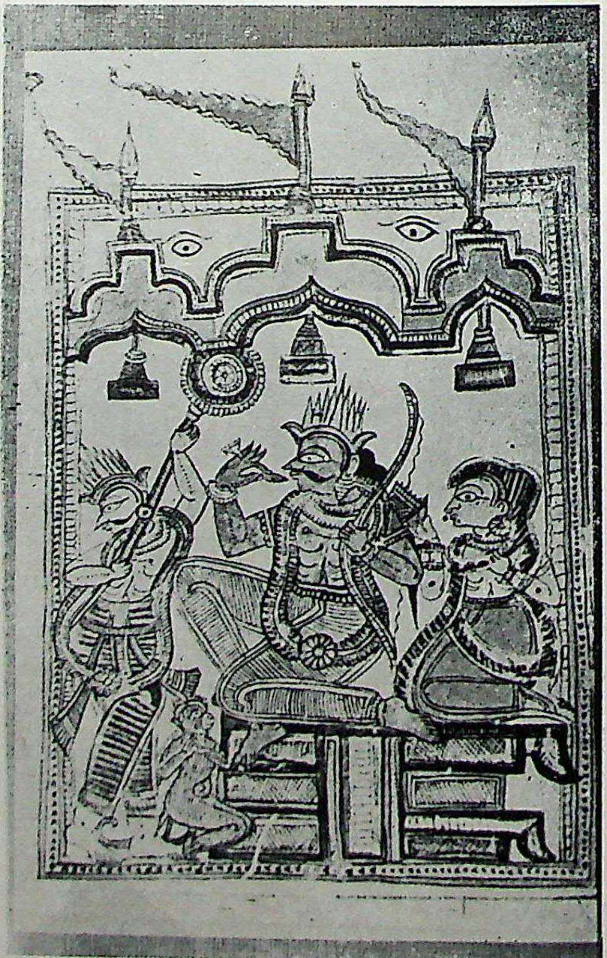

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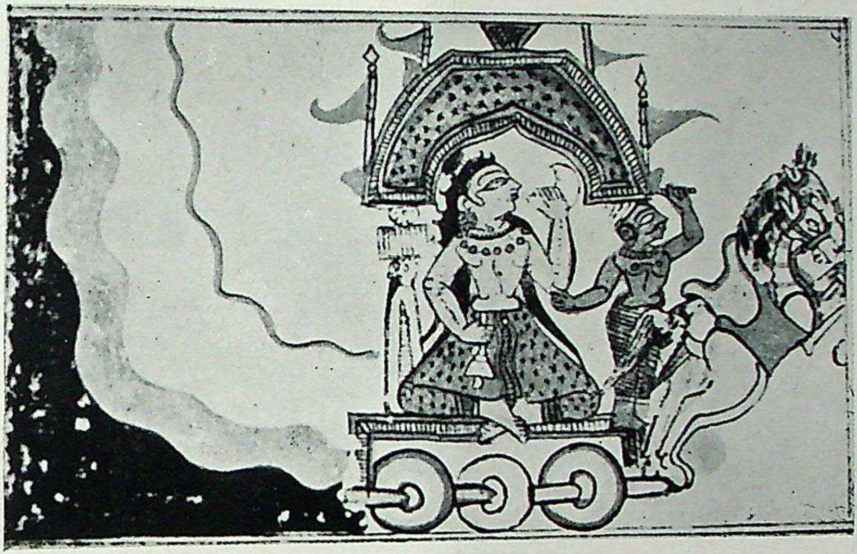

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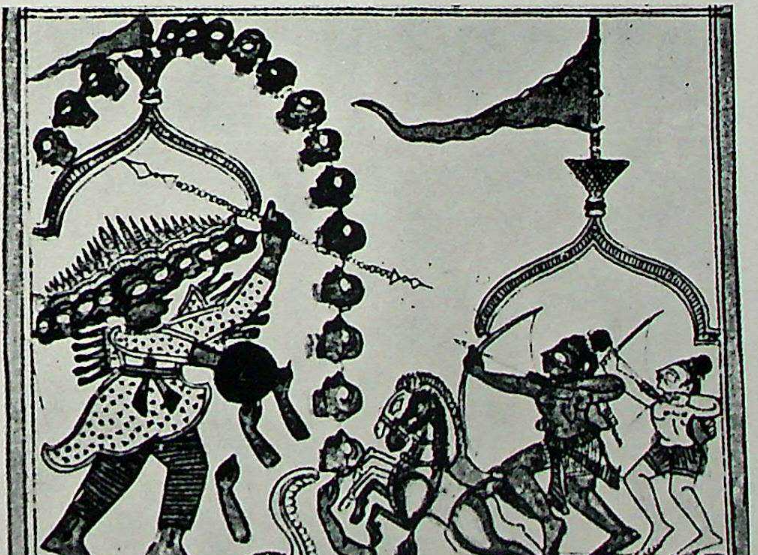

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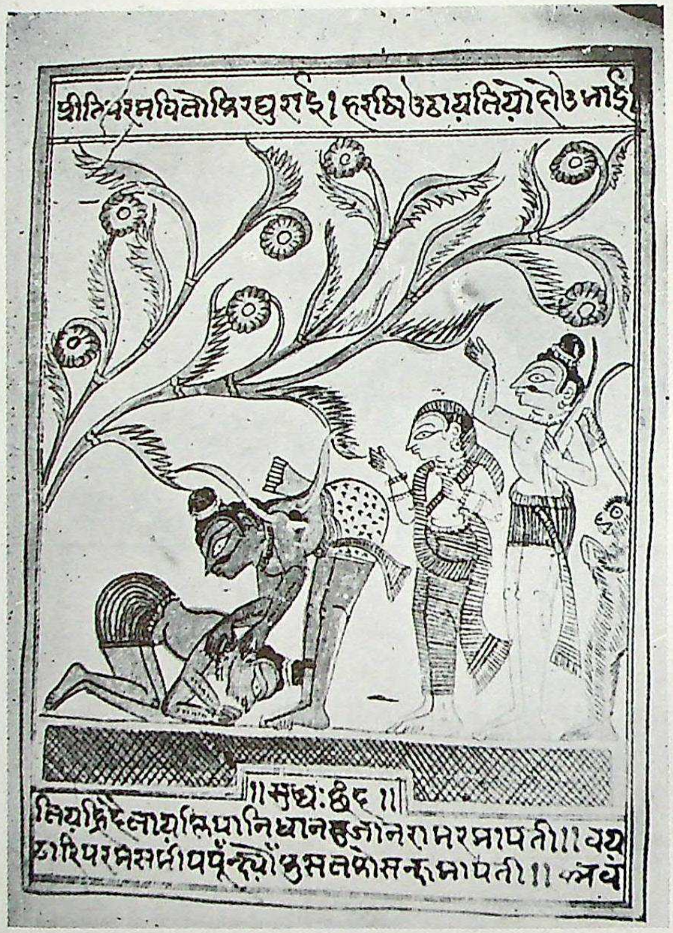
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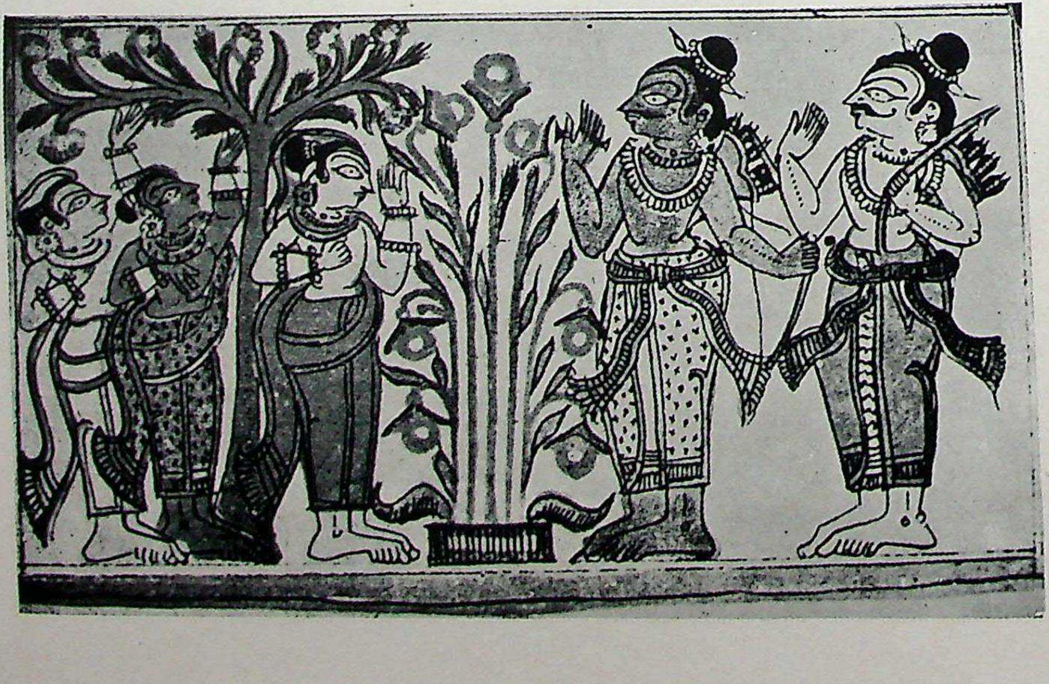

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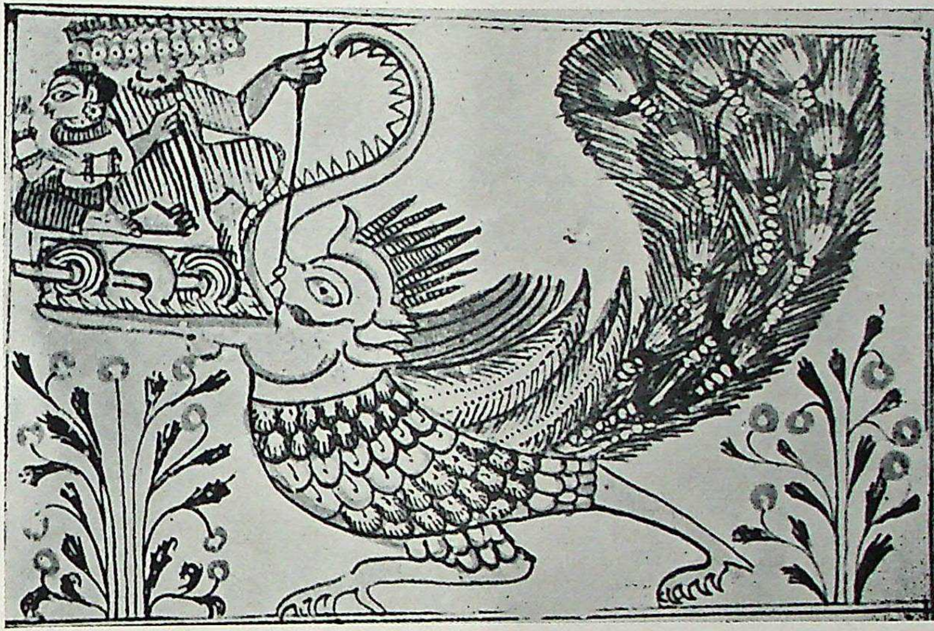

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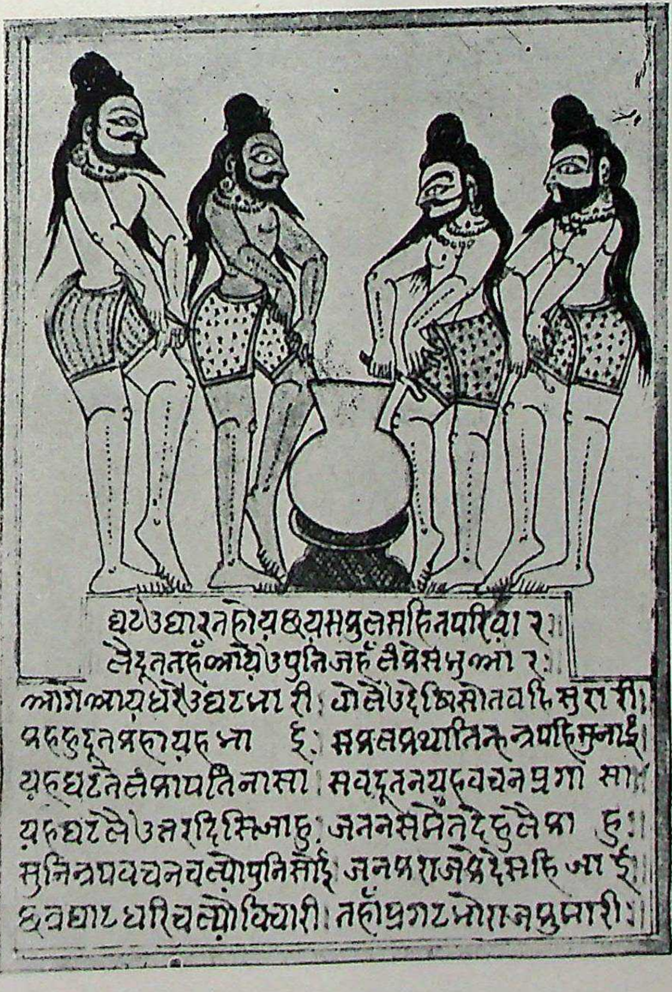

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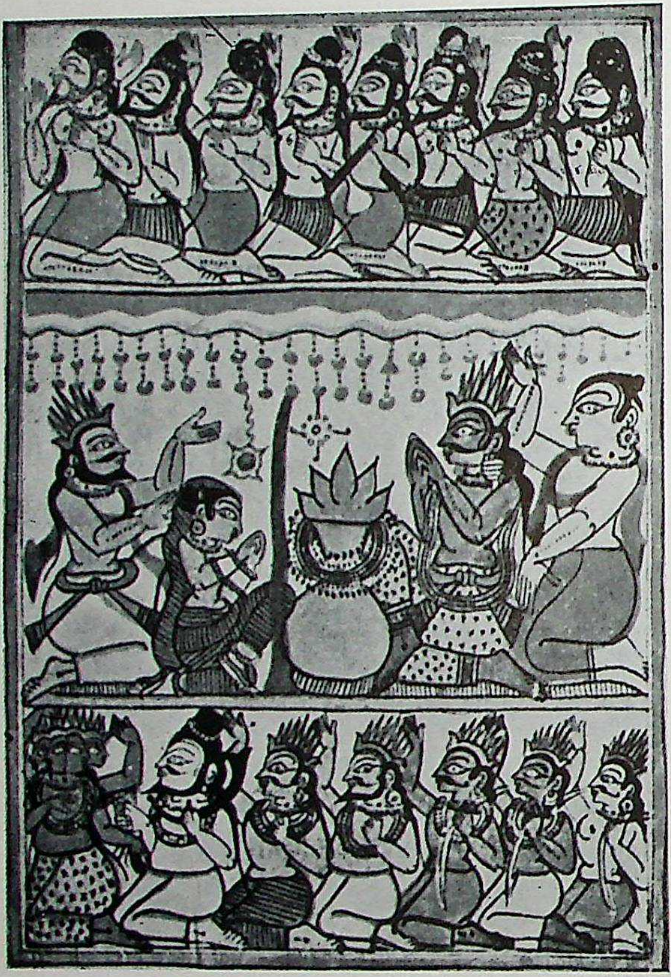

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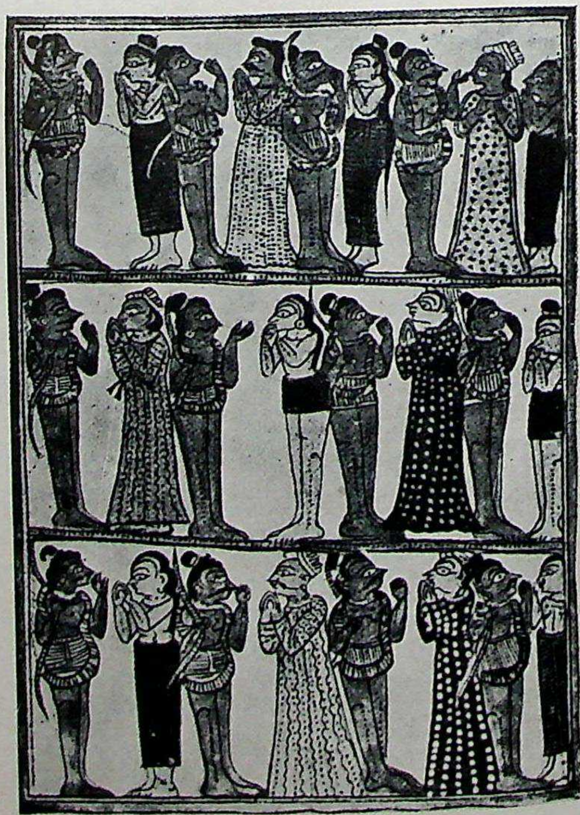

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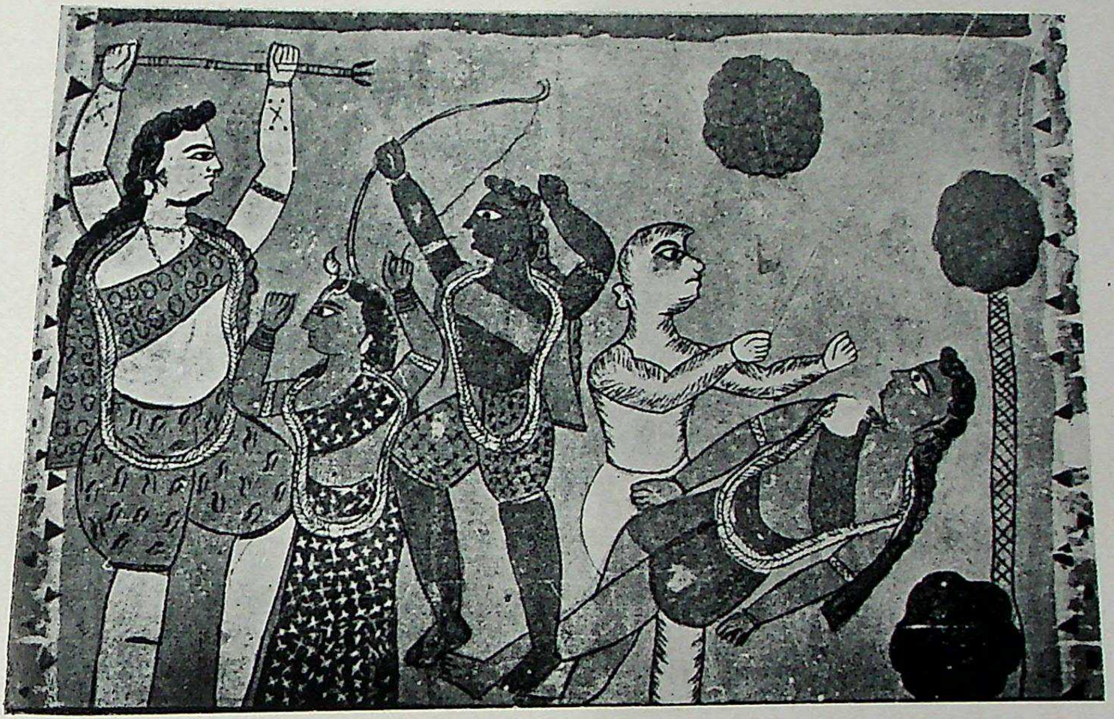

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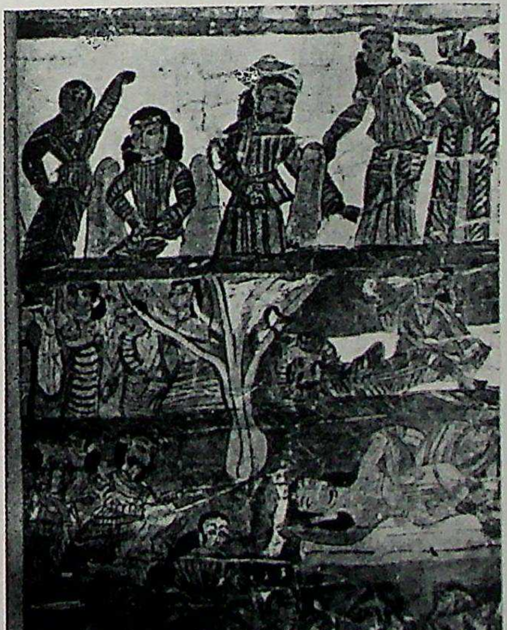

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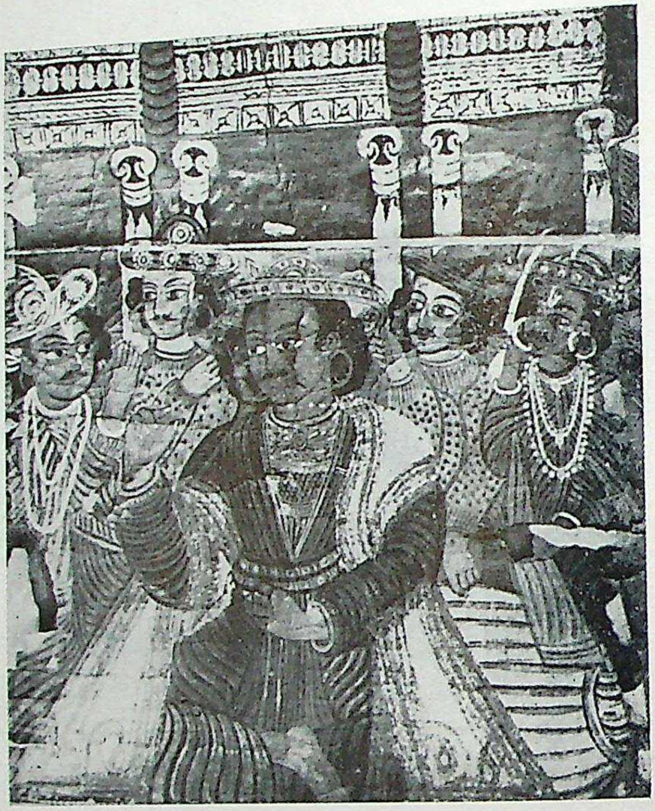

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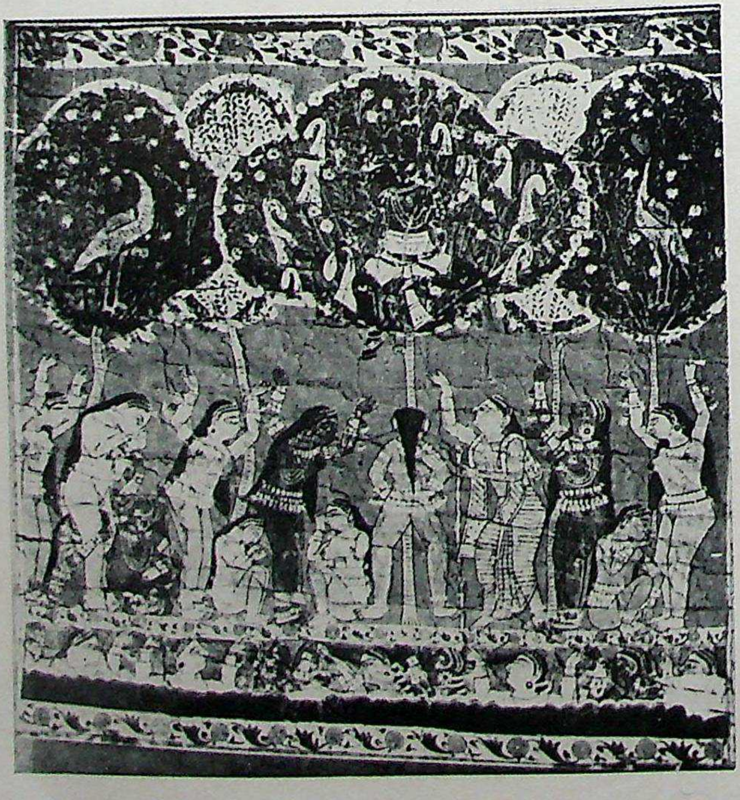

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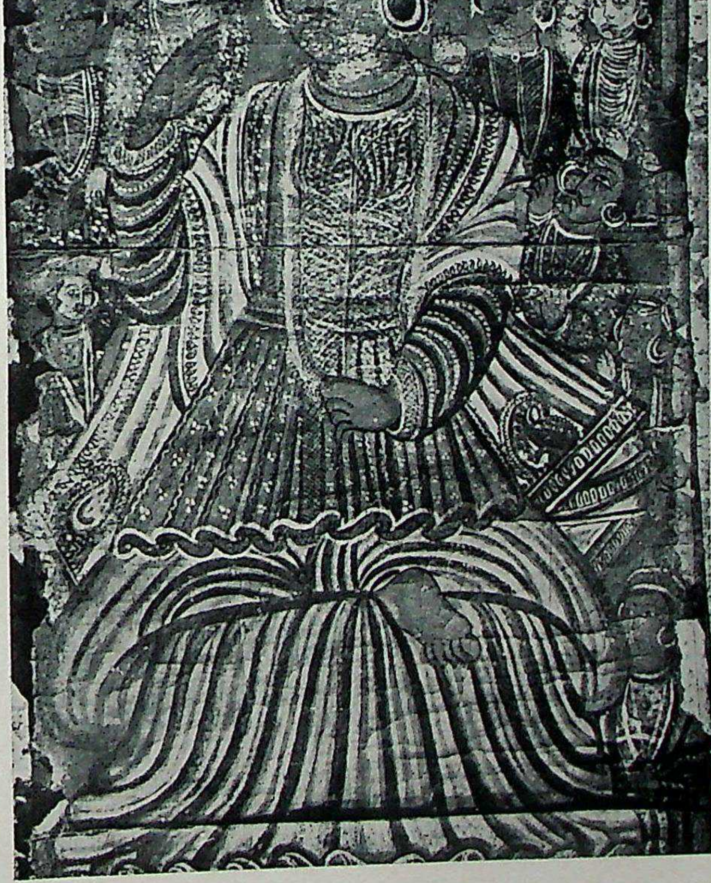

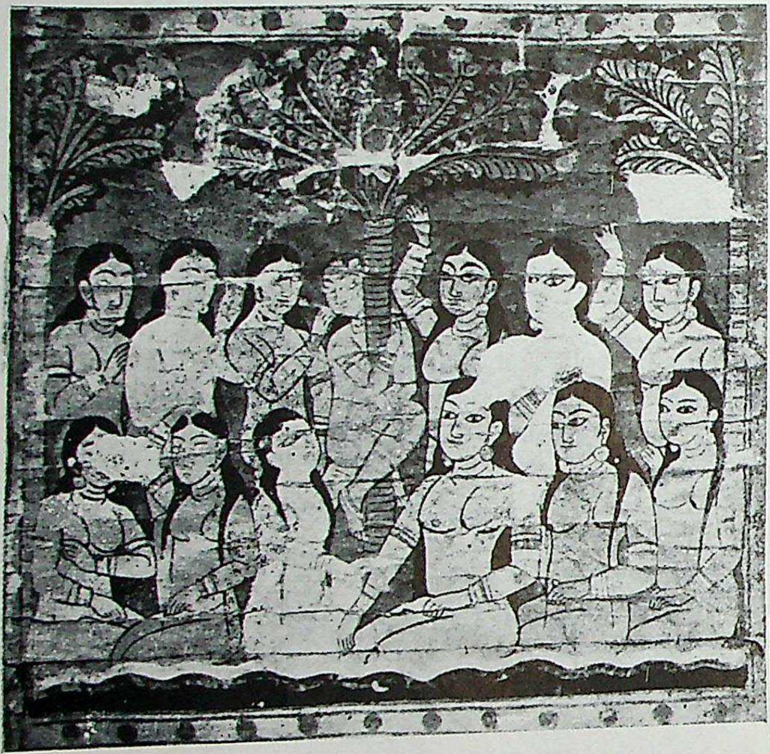

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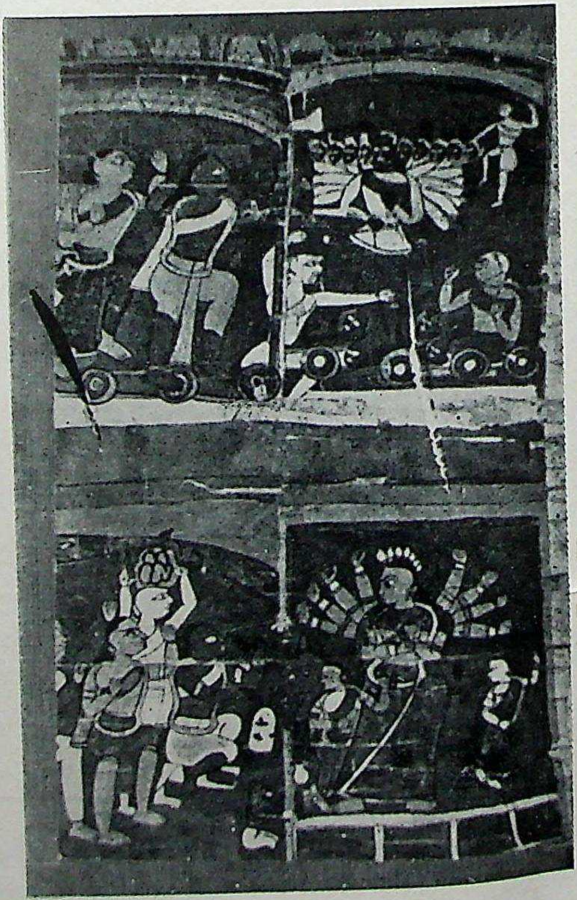

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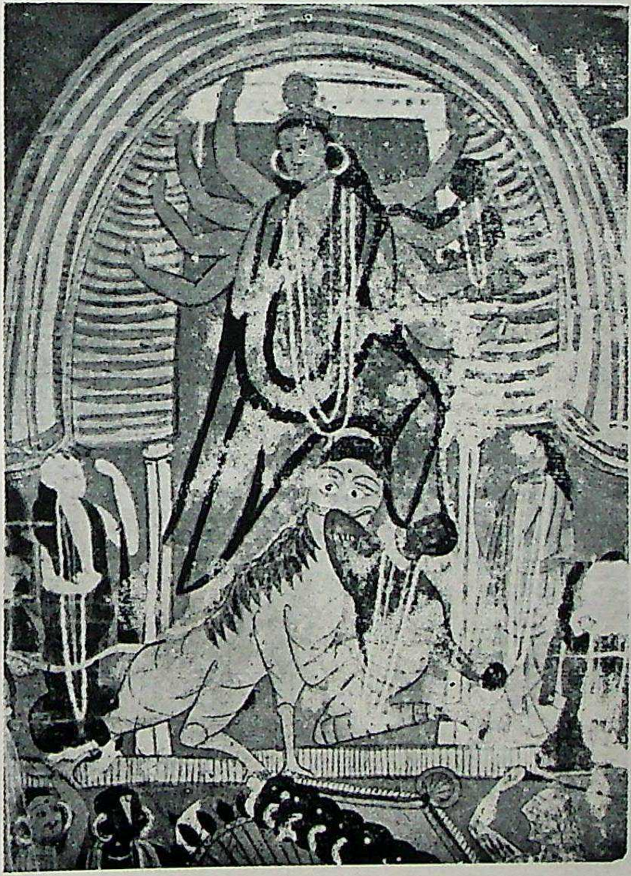

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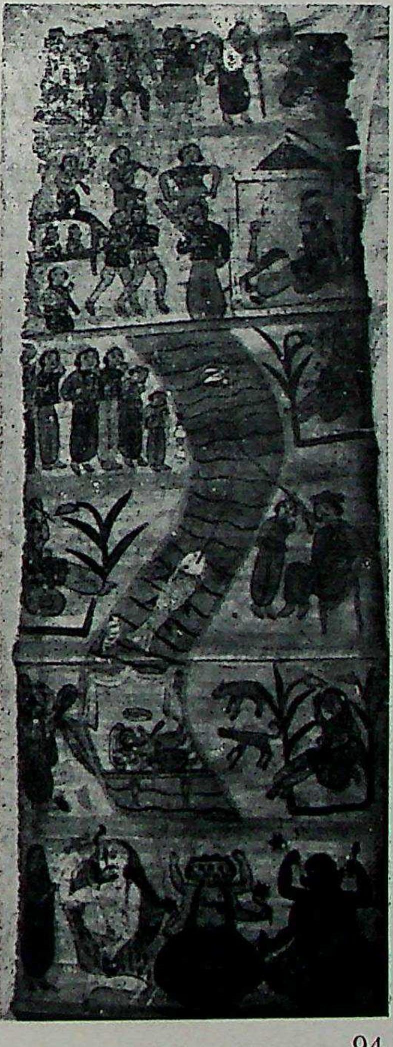

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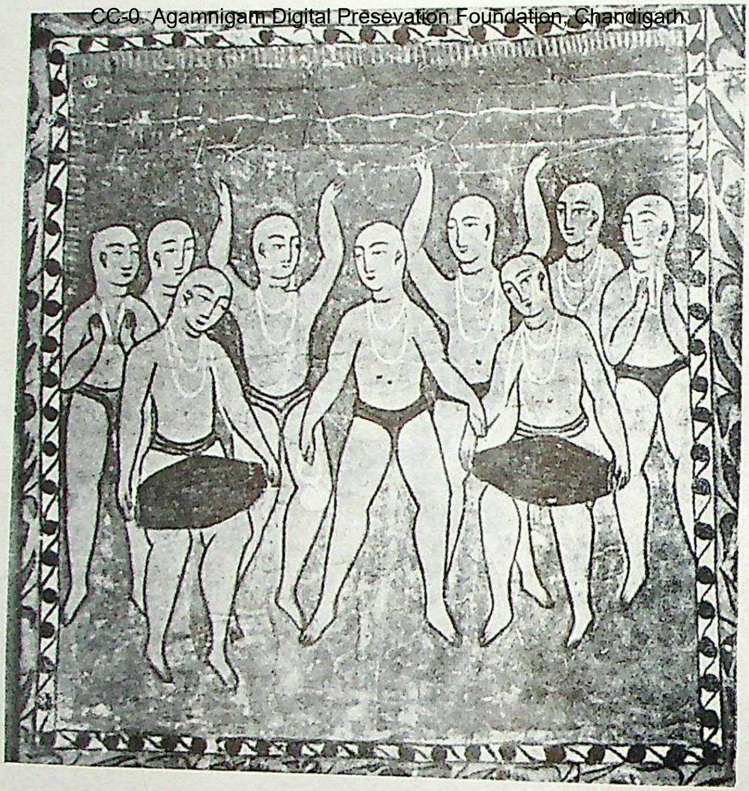

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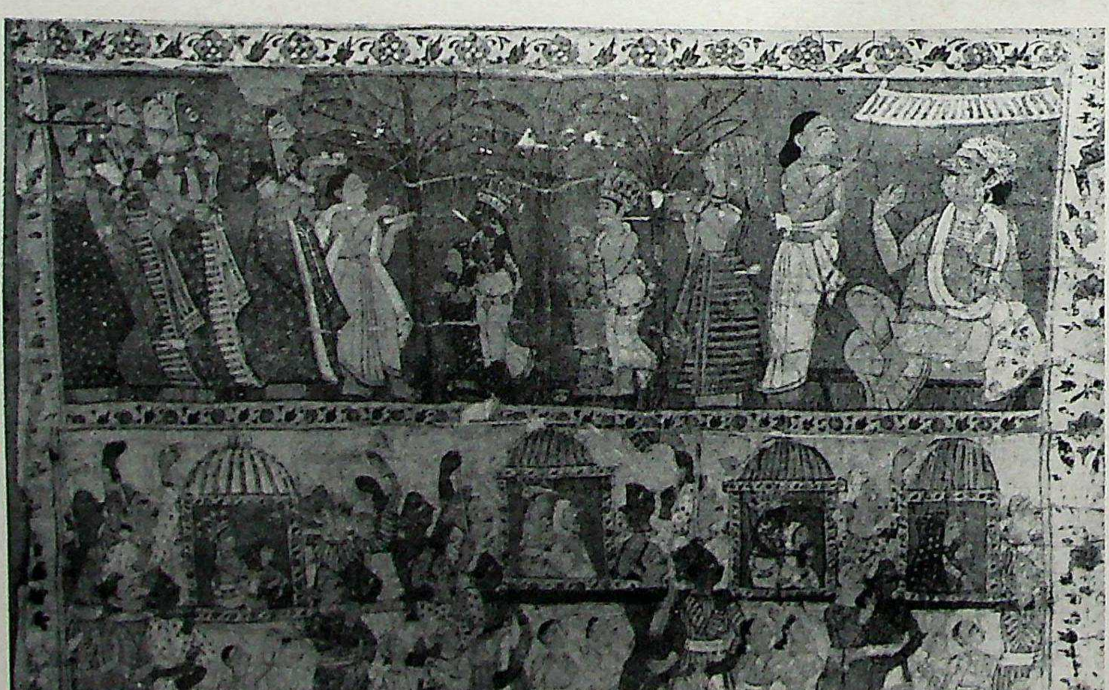

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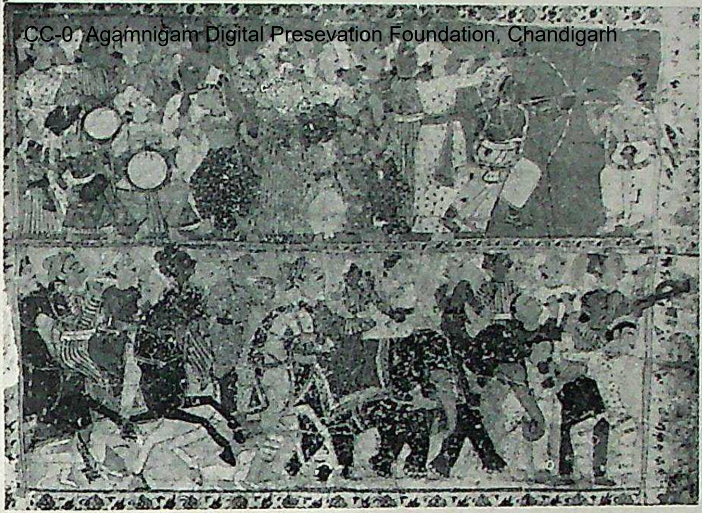

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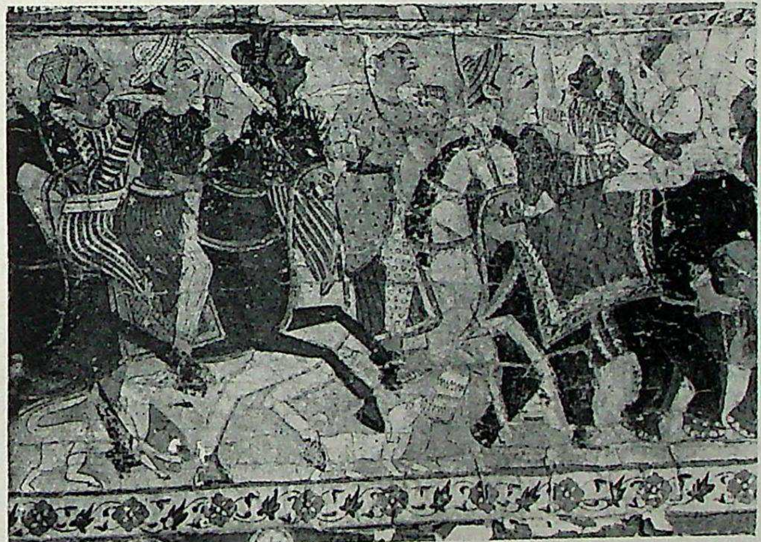

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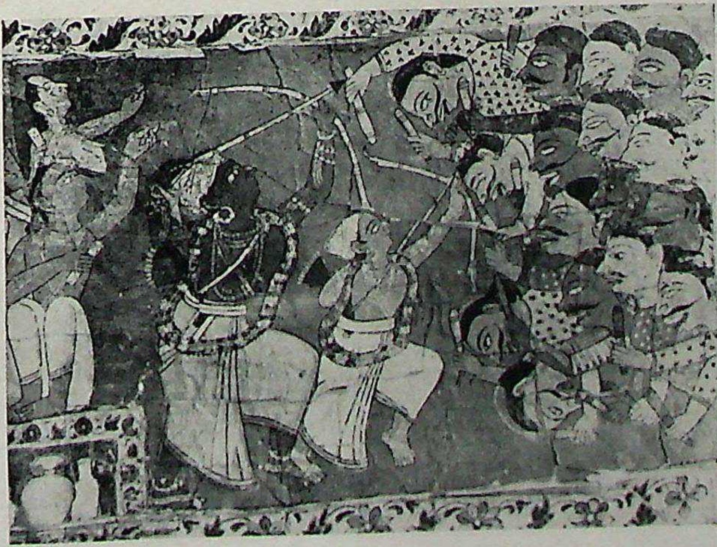

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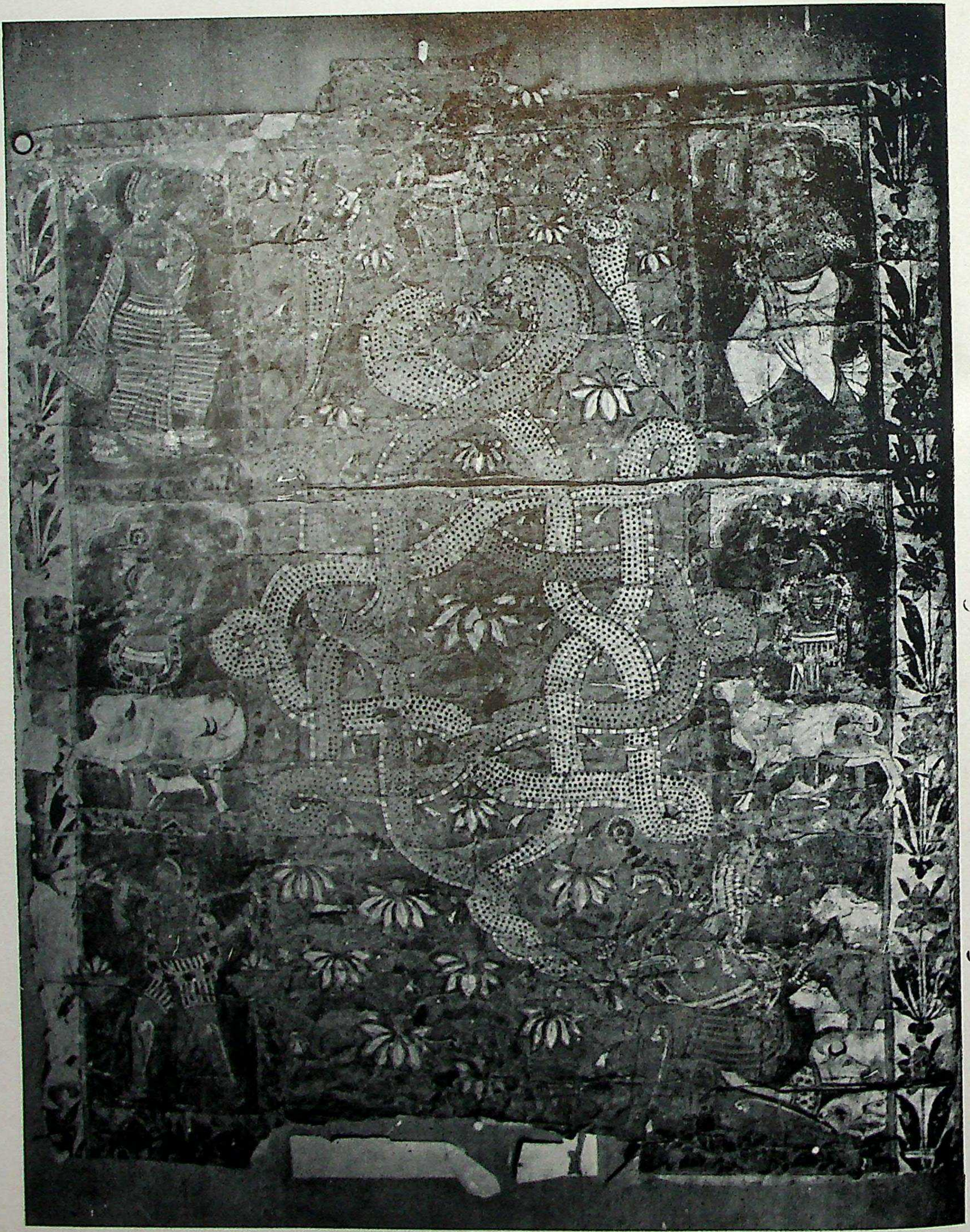

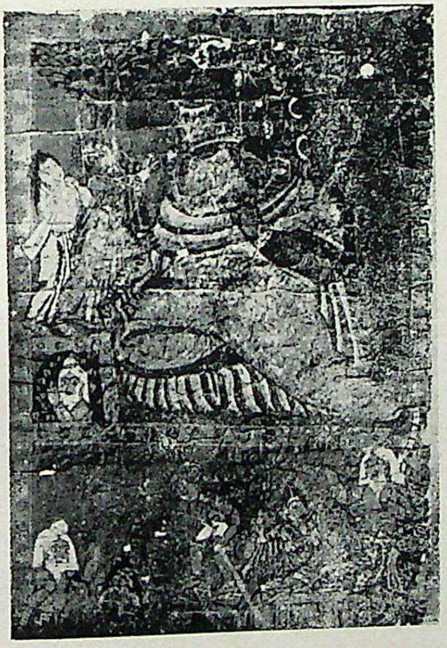

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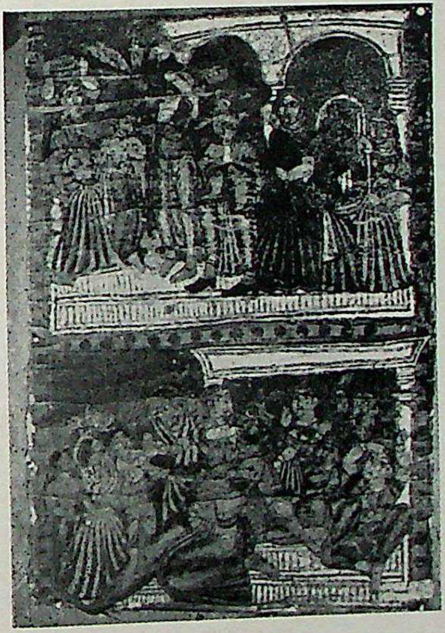

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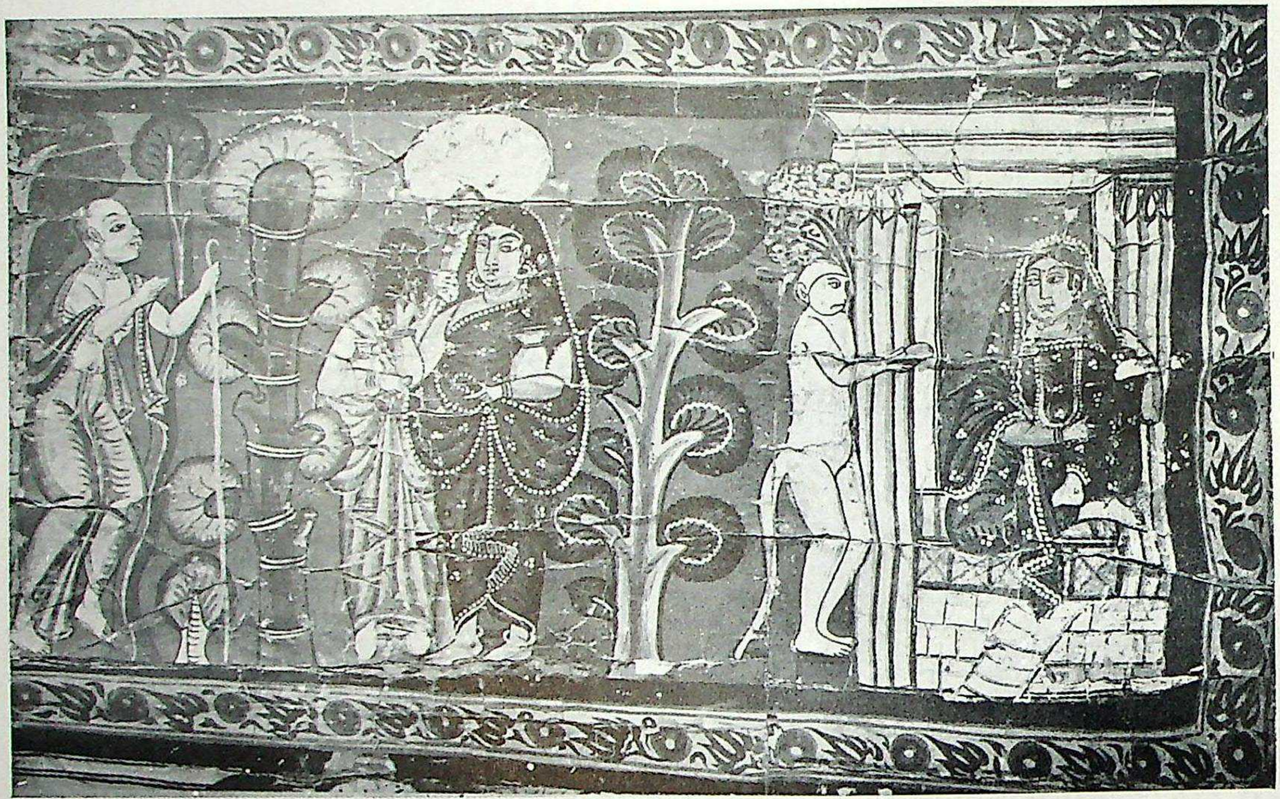

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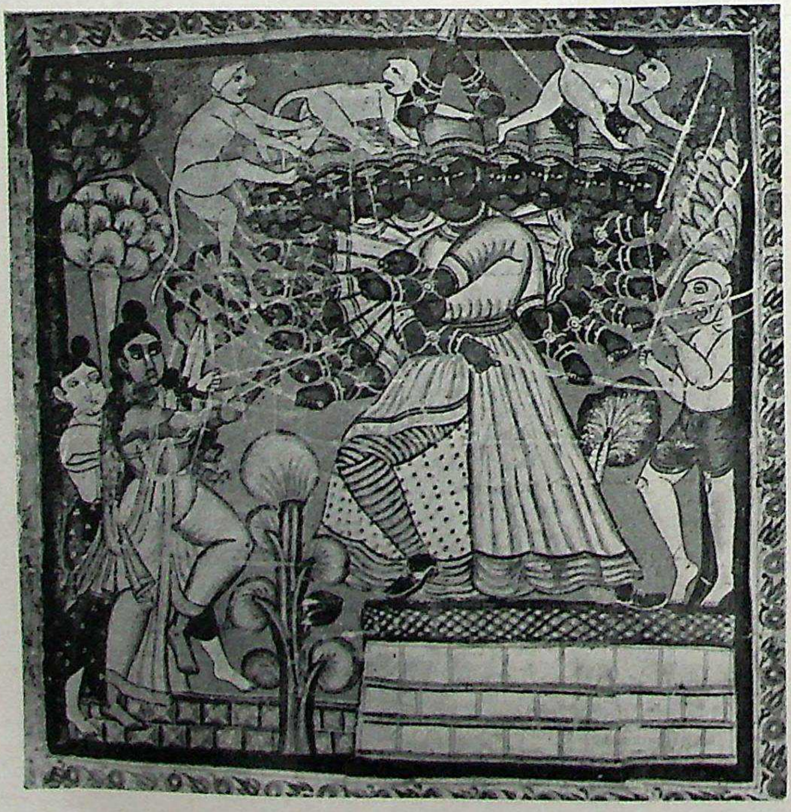

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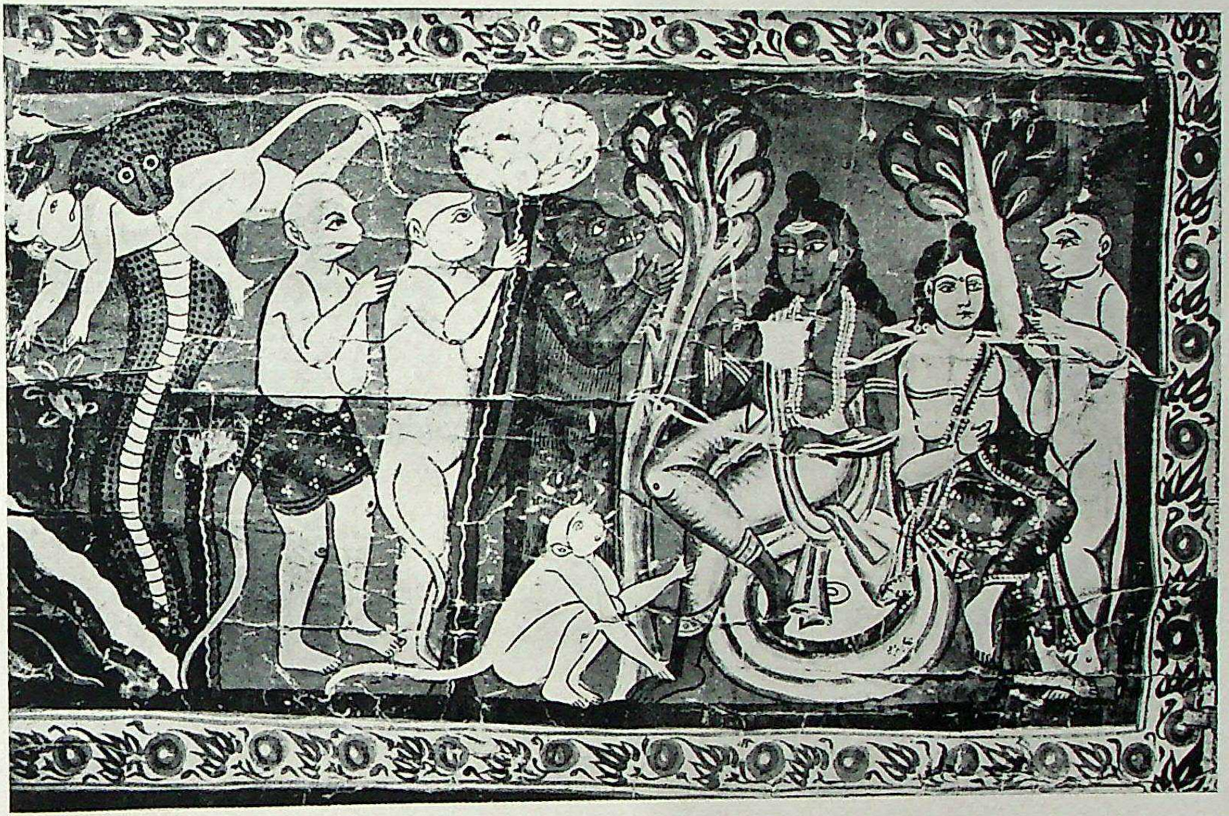

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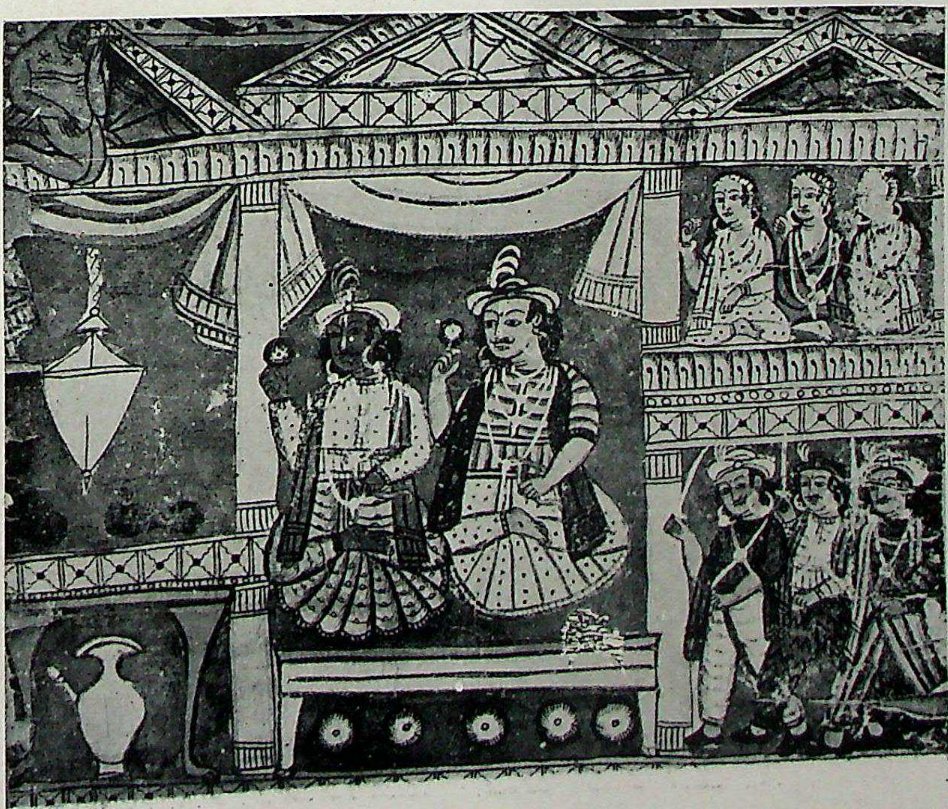

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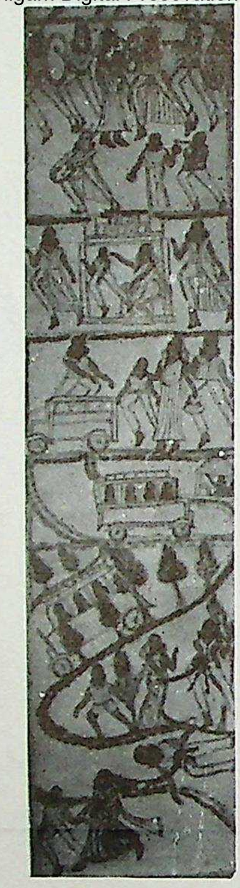

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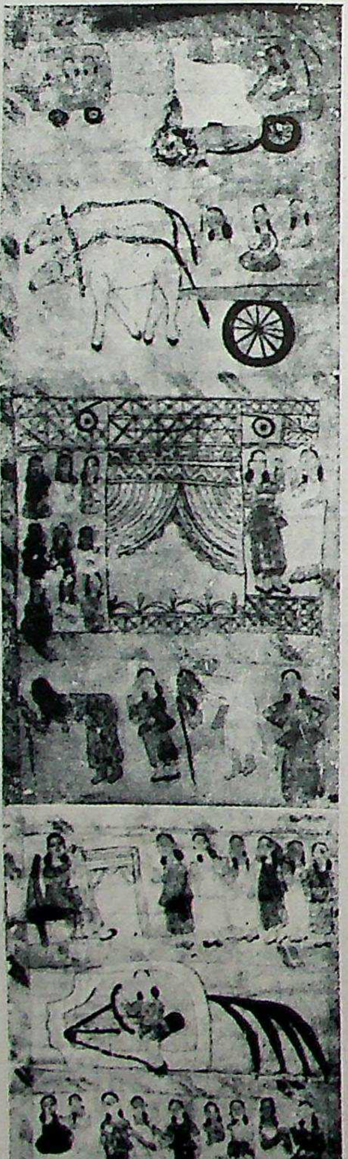

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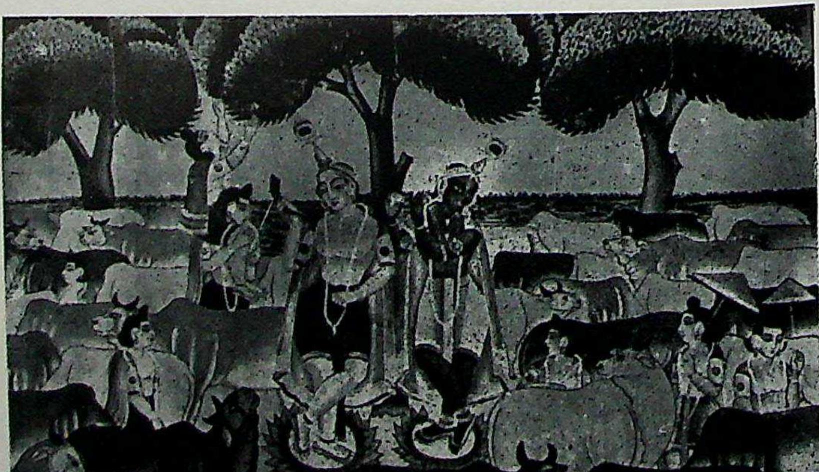

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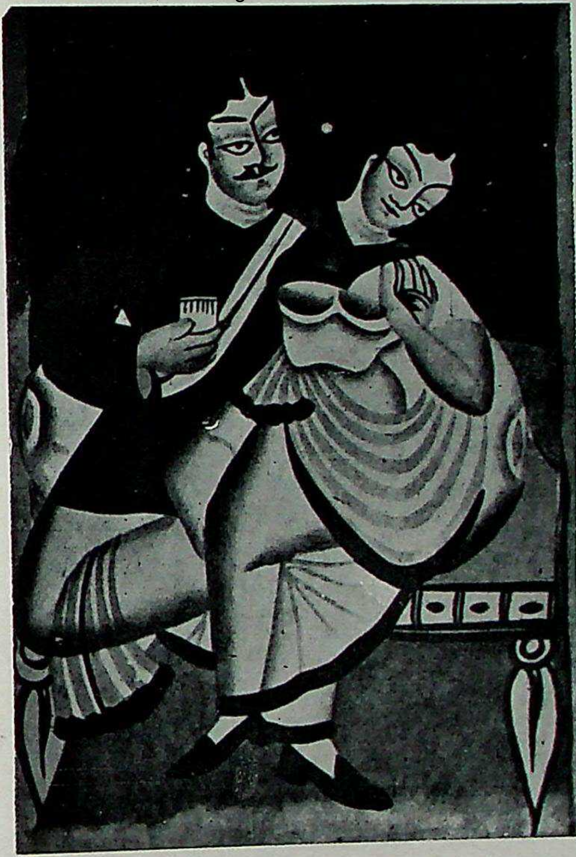

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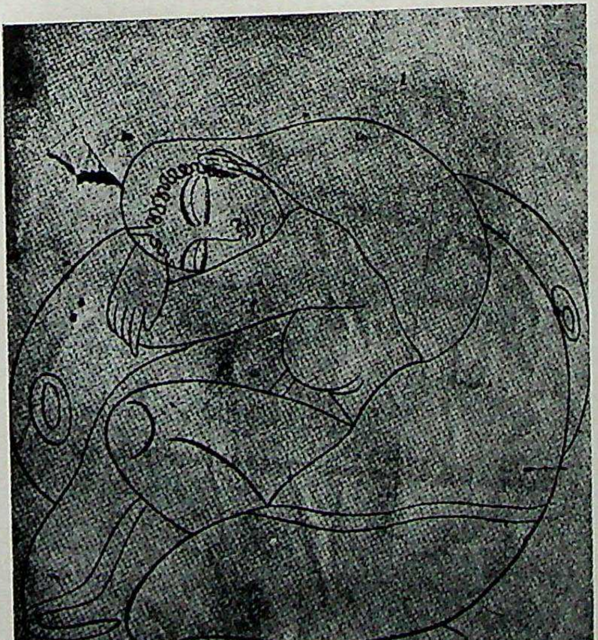

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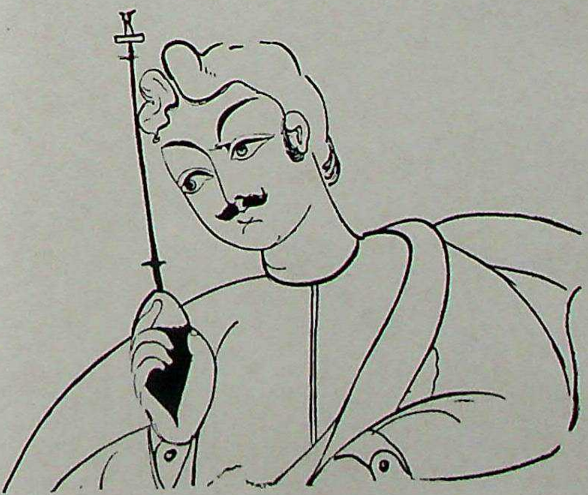

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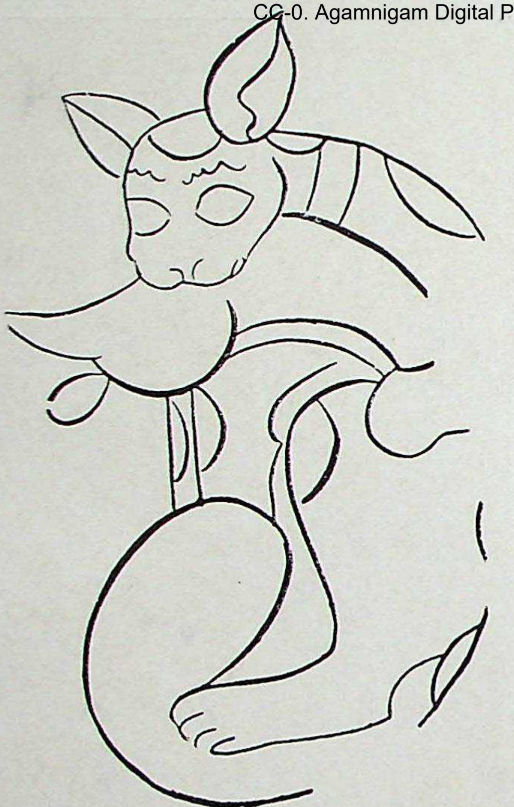

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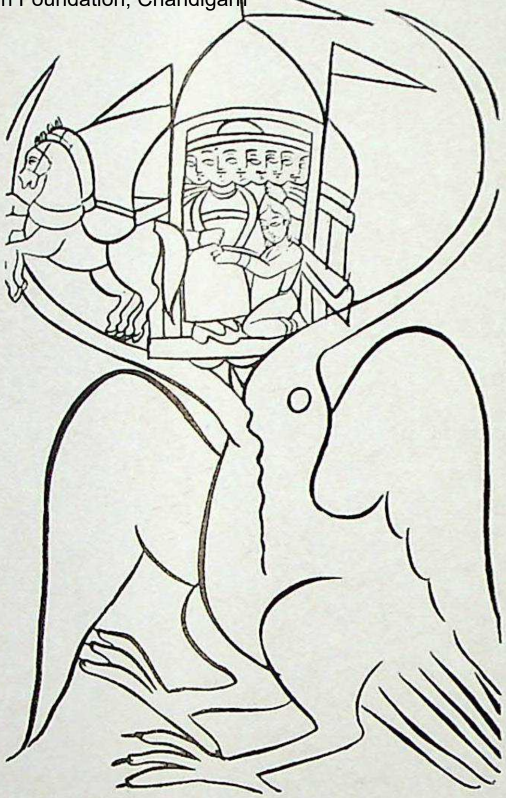

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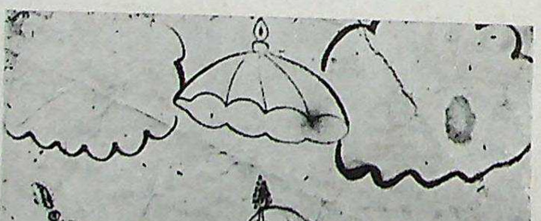

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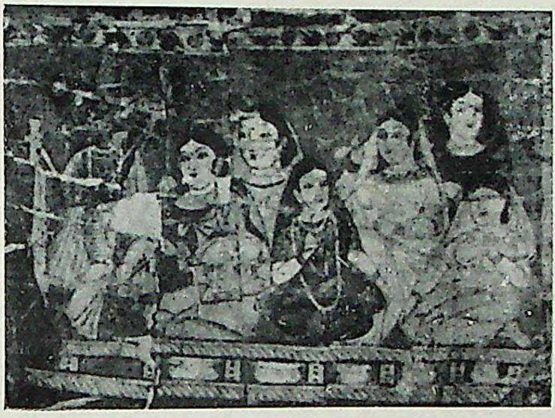

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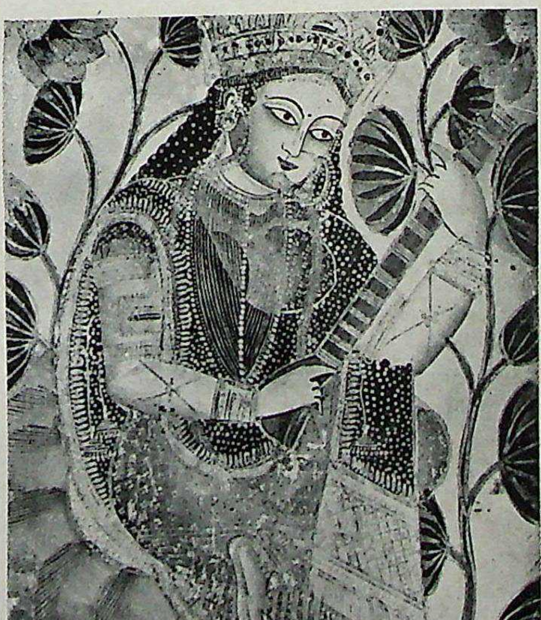

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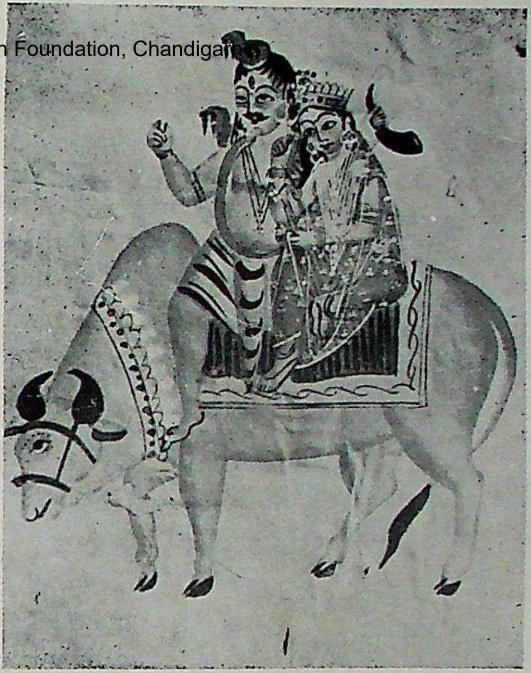

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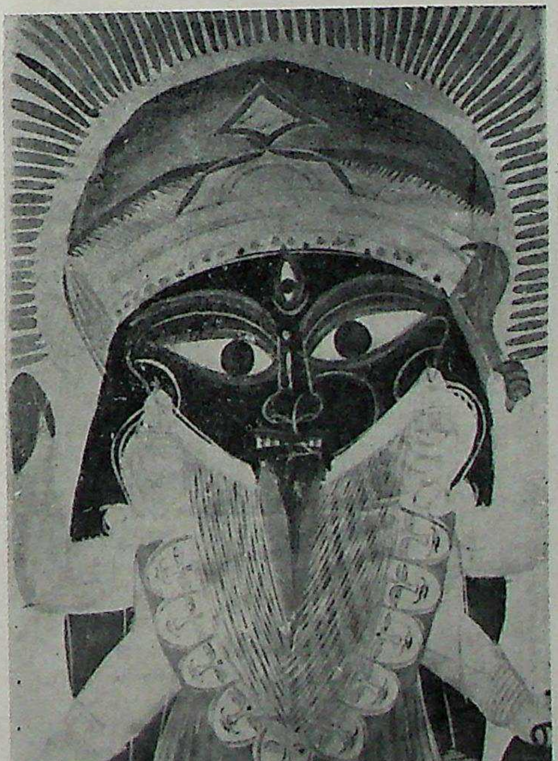

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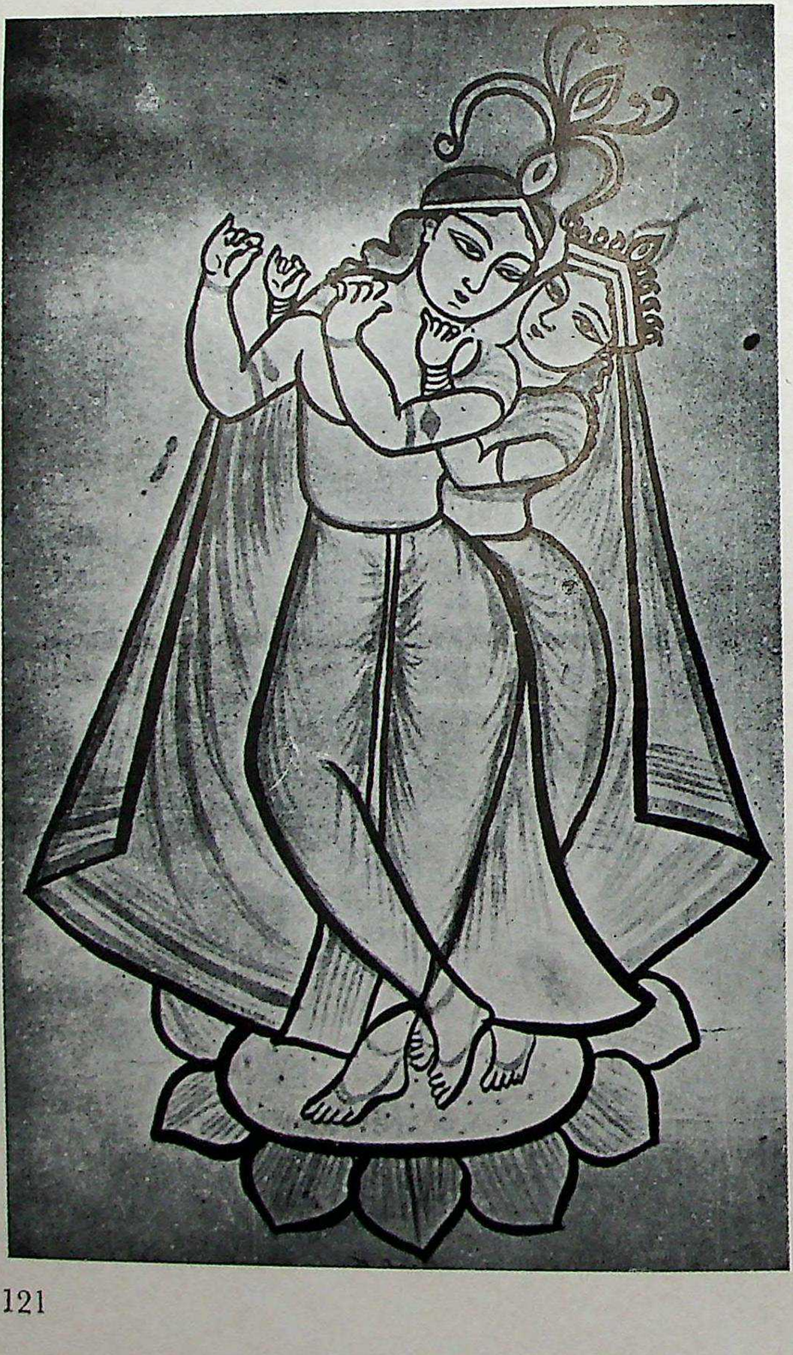

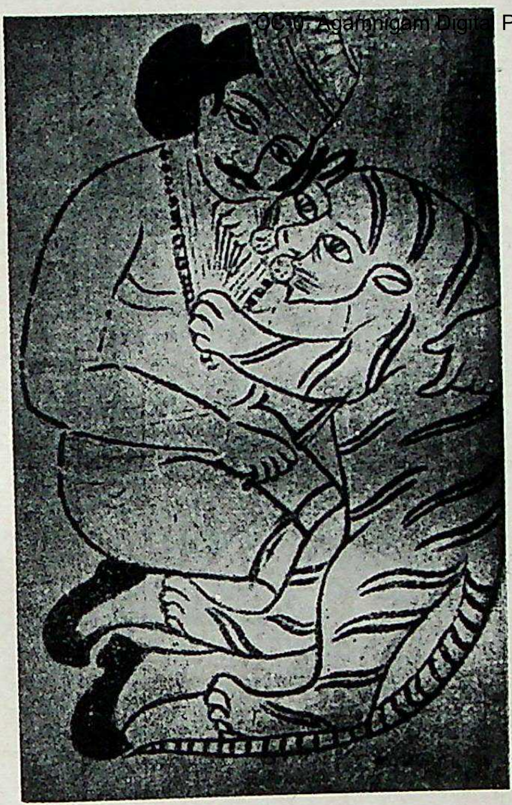

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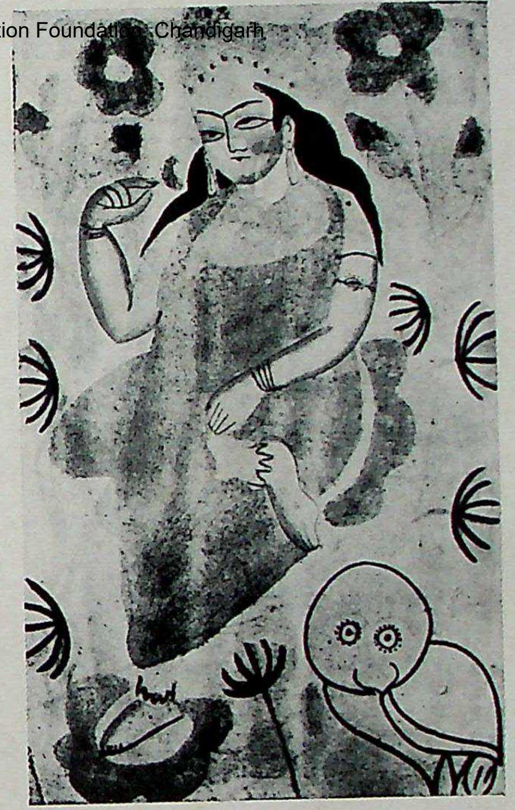

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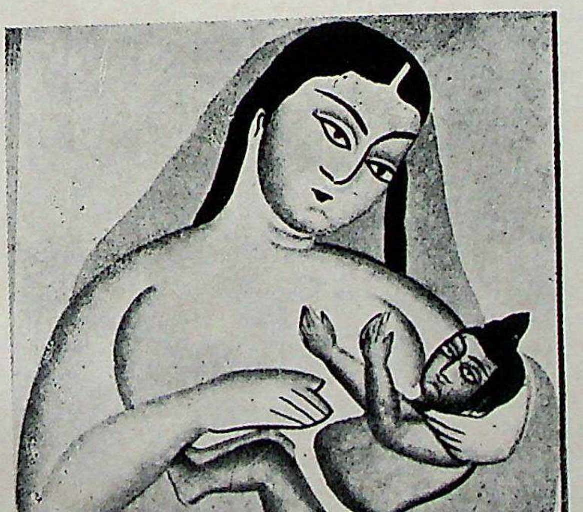

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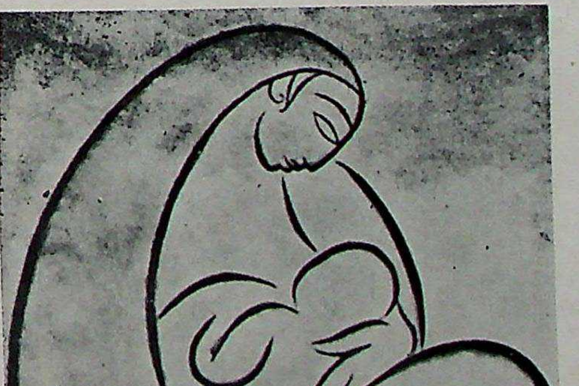

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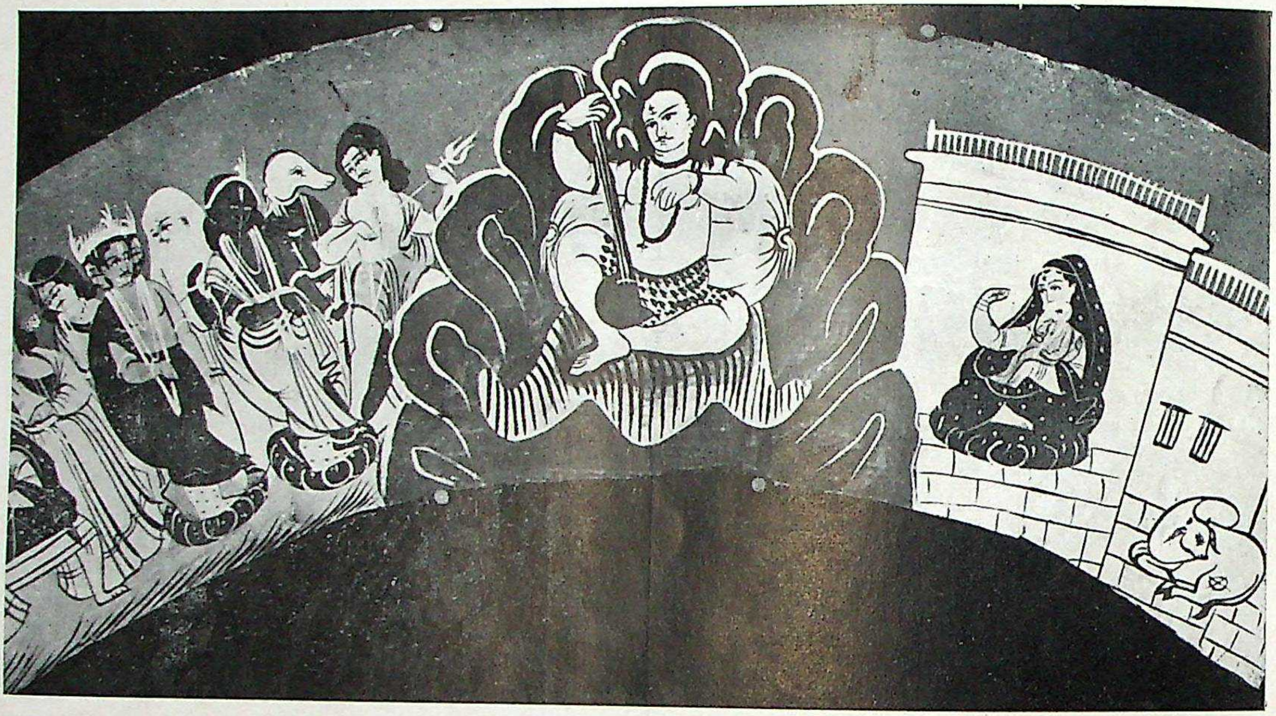

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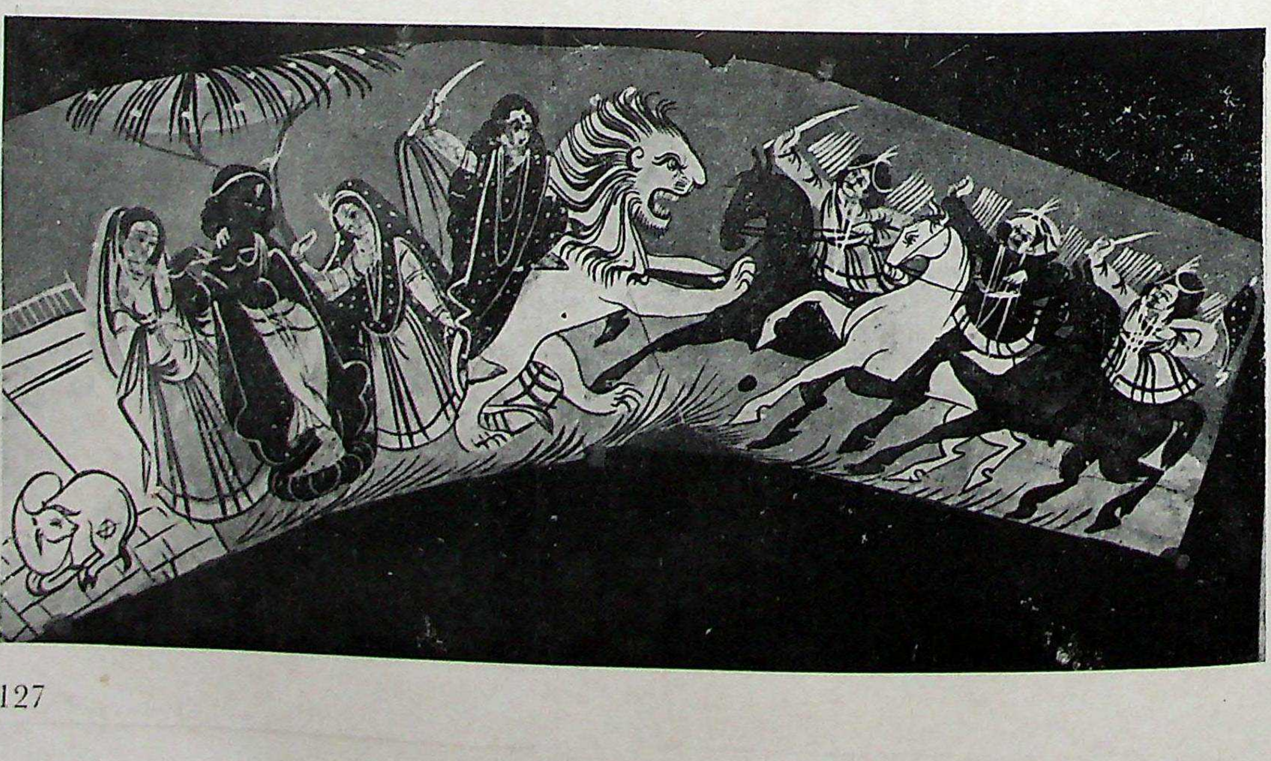

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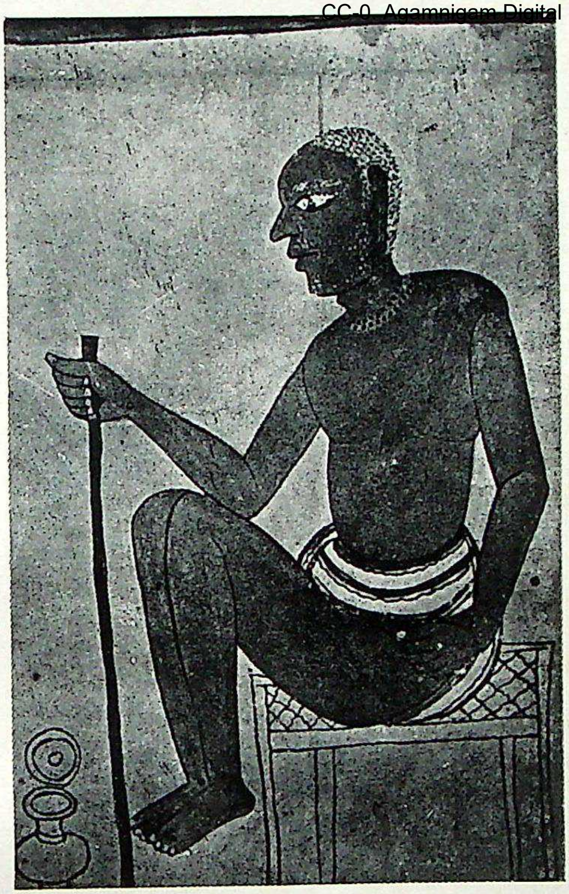

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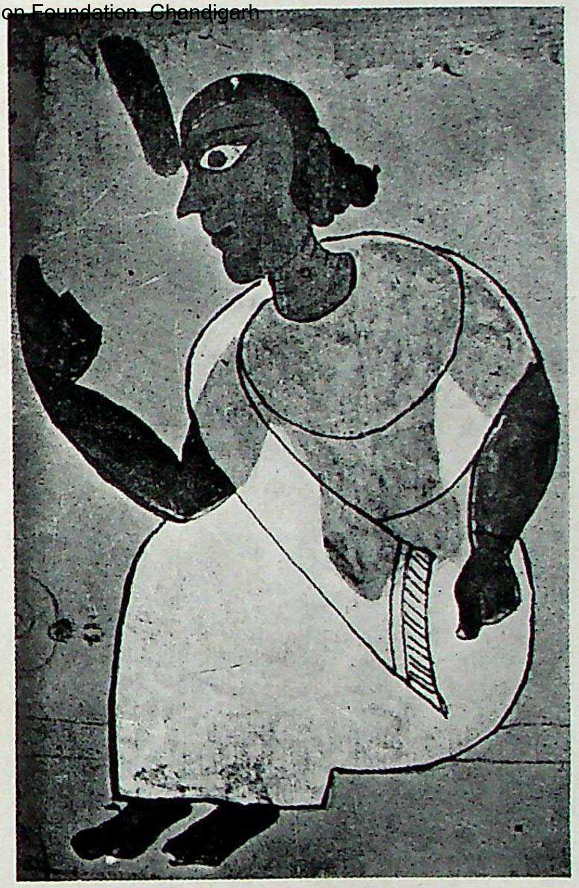

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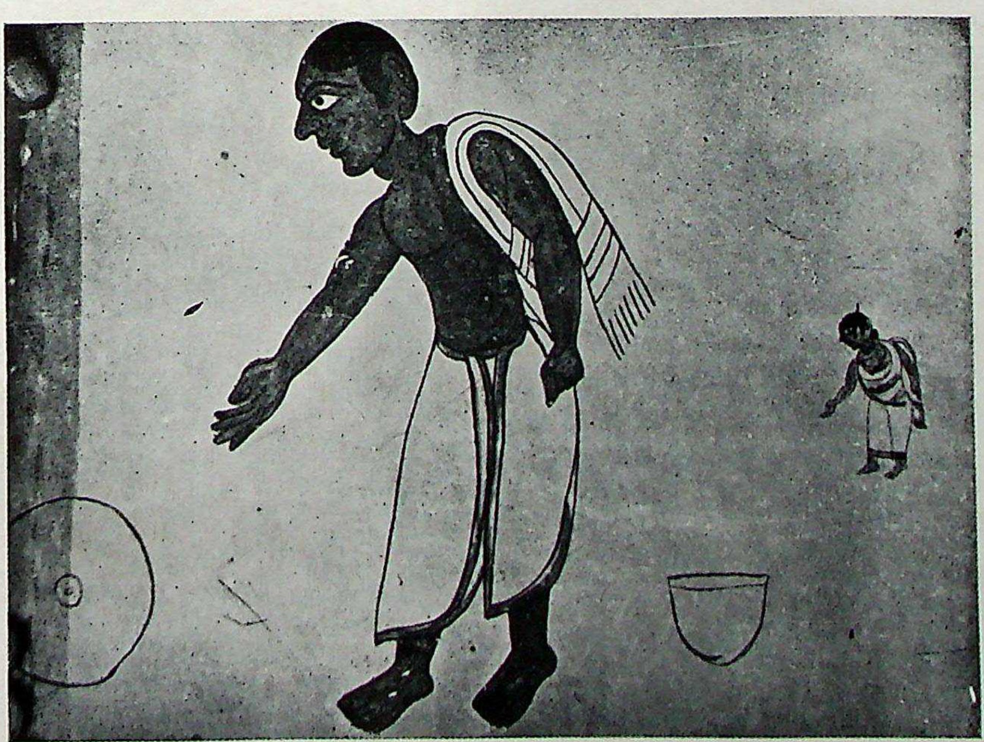

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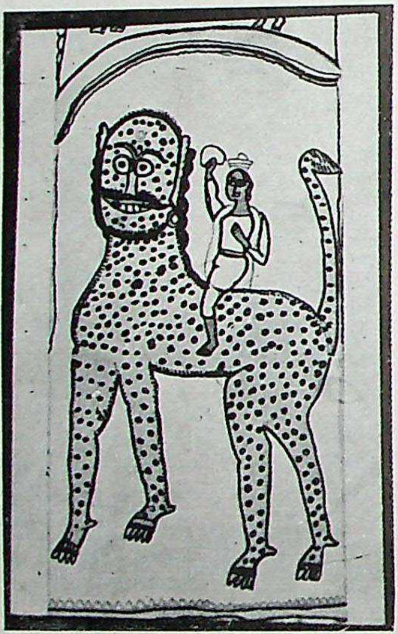

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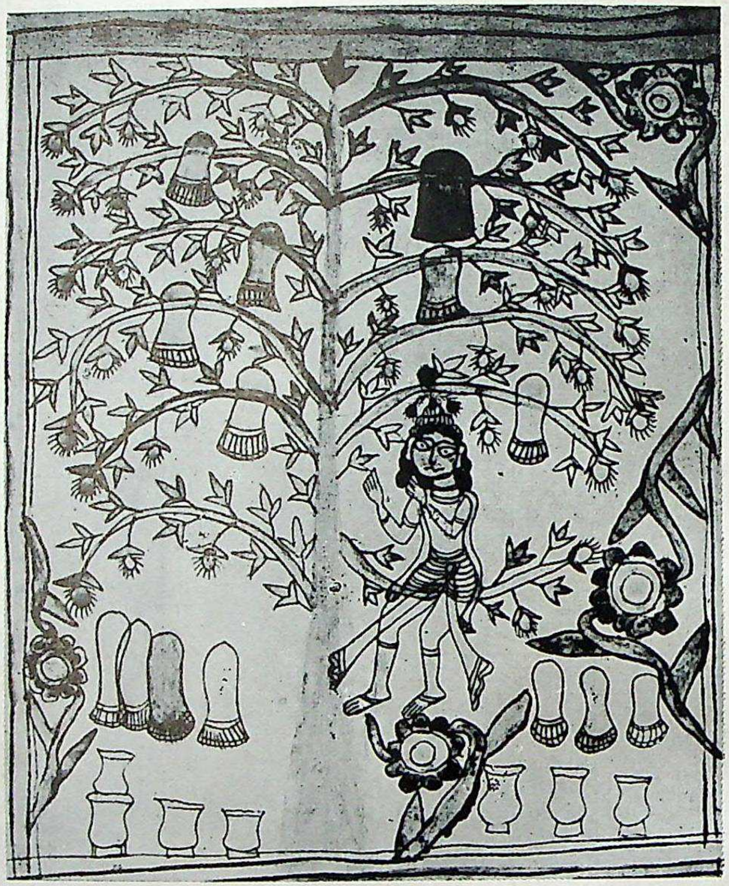

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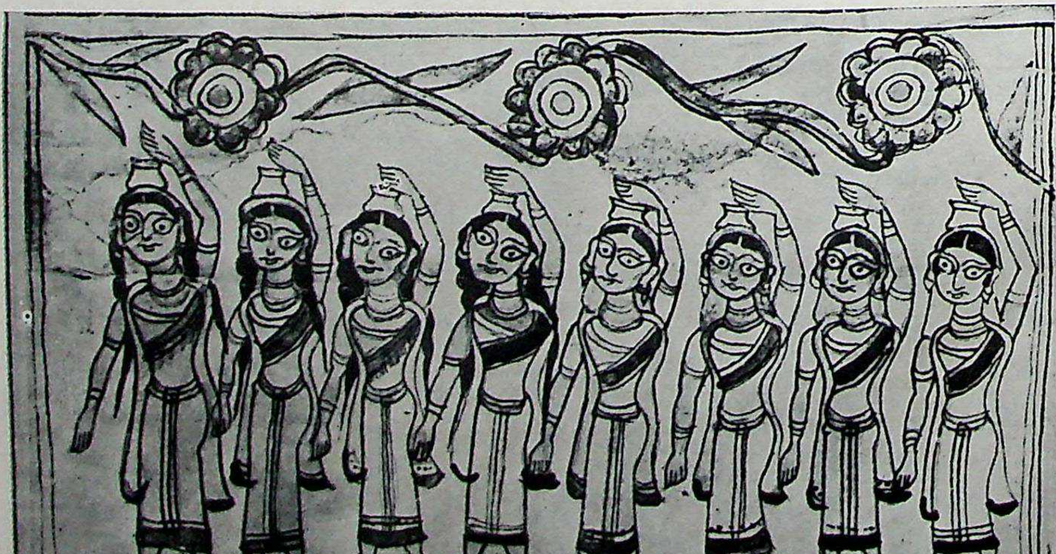

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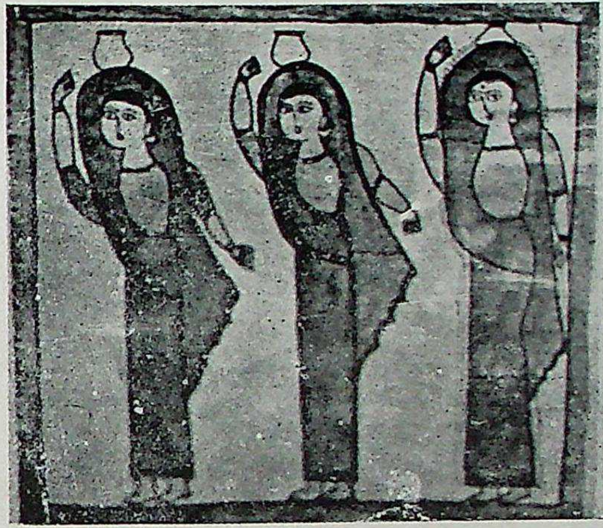

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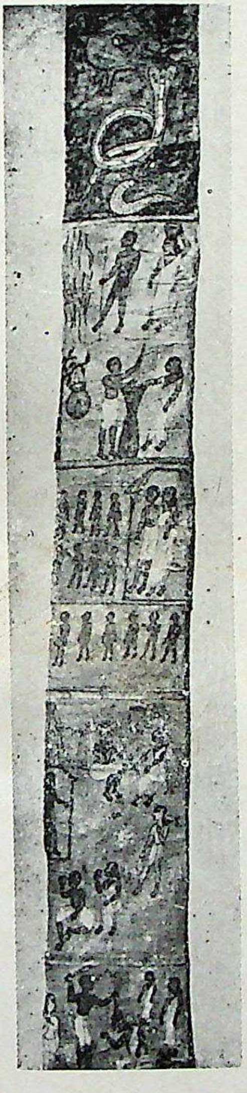

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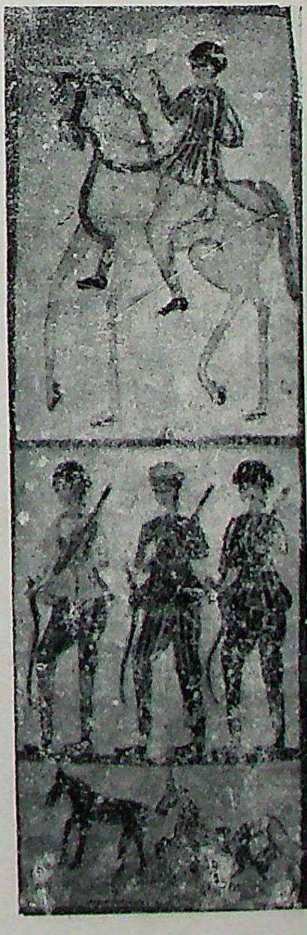

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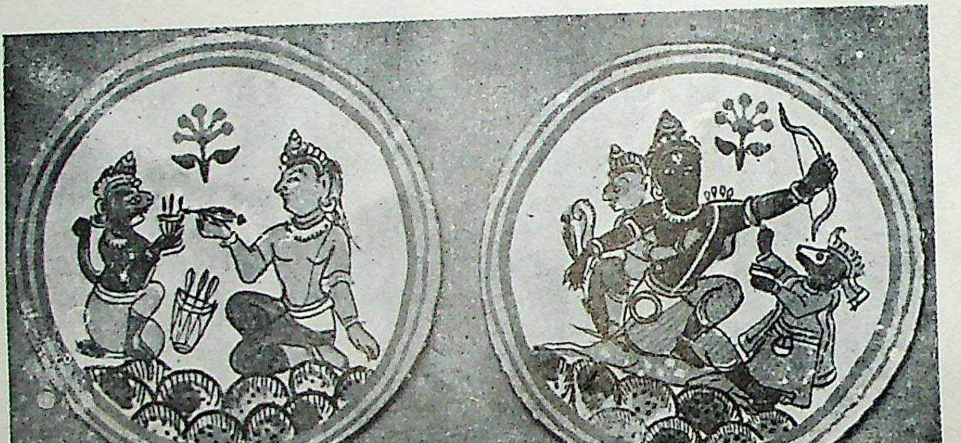

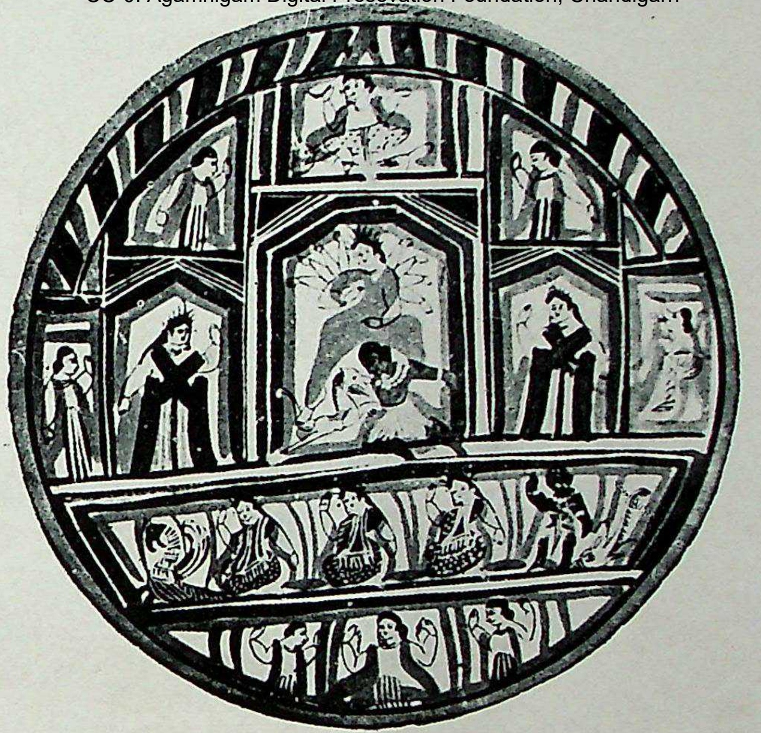

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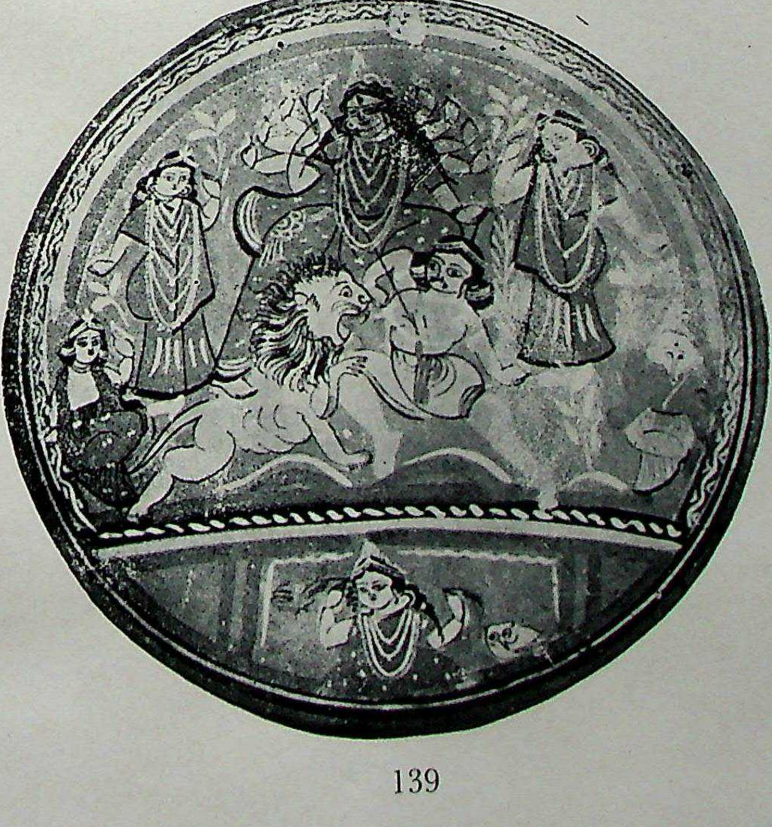

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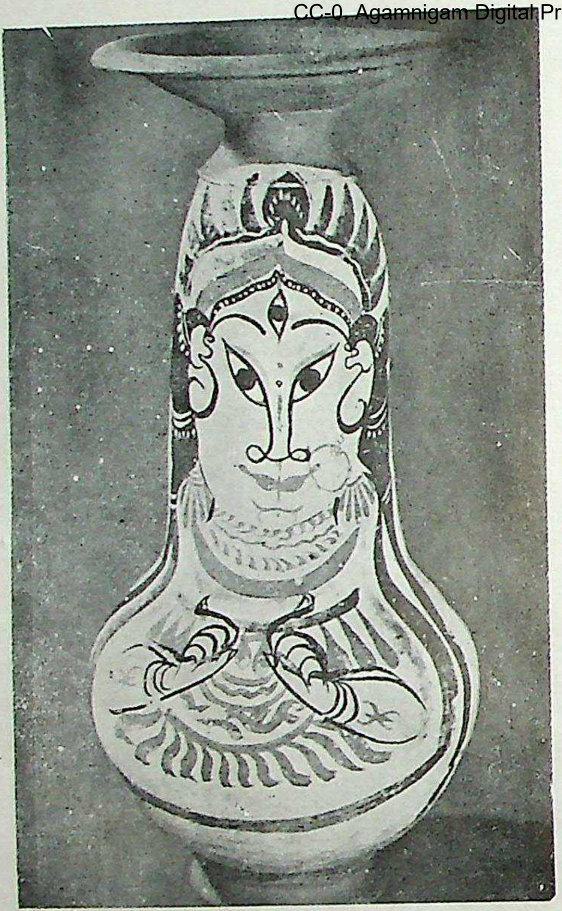

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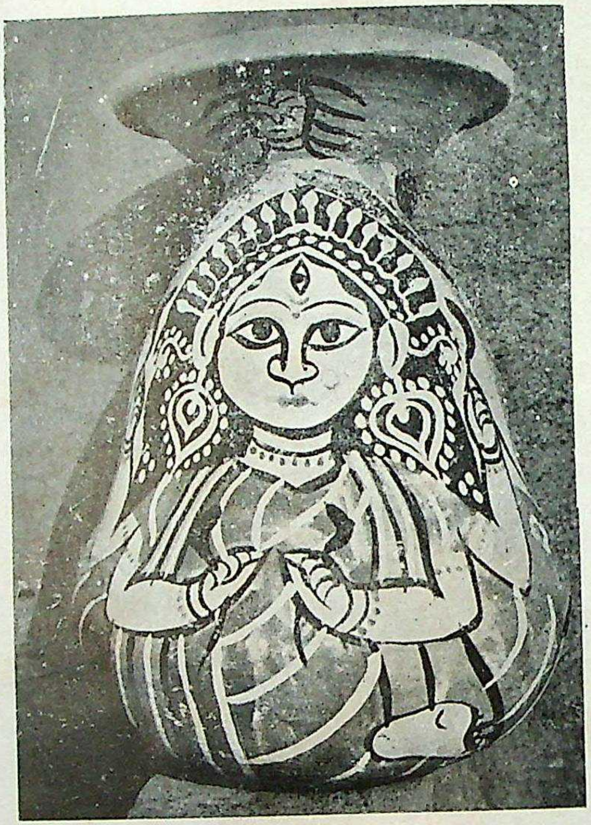

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